

**The Text as a Critical Object:
On Theorising Exegetic Procedure in Classroom-Based Critical Discourse Analysis**

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Abstract

The thesis is concerned with a recontextualisation of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for educational purposes. It examines CDA from the perspective of existing conceptual frameworks and procedures for the critical analysis of texts and offers an alternative theorisation of CDA for a university context. Beginning with an outline of the circumstances in which the study evolved, the thesis examines and reformulates the meaning of a critical practice by reappraising perceptions of ideology, knowledge, power, discourse, and emancipation in CDA. This it does particularly in relation to the CDA of Norman Fairclough. One reason CDA is critical is due to its association with the critical social theory of thinkers such as Marx, Althusser, Gramsci and Foucault. This has provided CDA with theoretically developed critical conceptions of society and of discourse. At the level of the text CDA has relied on a procedural model derived from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The position of the thesis is that SFL is not a critical social theory and that a 'critical' theorisation of procedure at the level of the text is therefore absent in CDA. The thesis suggests a possible development of this space in which critical exegetic and discursive procedures are theorised from the perspectives of M. Foucault, T. W. Adorno, J. Derrida and J. Habermas. It argues for the opening of a dialogue between these thinkers in the interests of an educational practice which is centred on the text. These theoretical strands are woven together to produce a procedural framework for the critical reading and discussion of texts. This is applied to a defined university context and the results documented. The procedural practice which the framework exemplifies is termed treating the text as a critical object (TACO). This offers an alternative model of exegesis for teachers, students, and non-specialists to use in the sociological/semiotic/linguistic and *critical* analysis of texts.

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Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Signed:  .

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Chapter One

The Context for the Text as a Critical Object

1.1 Chapter synopsis

This chapter introduces the principal areas of interest in this thesis and explains why a theorisation of exegetic procedure is an absence in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The chapter describes how I became interested in CDA and identifies some of the problems I have experienced when applying CDA models of analysis to a classroom context. These have concerned in particular the vagueness and indeterminacy of the Marxist rationale for doing CDA and the problems which CDA's attachment to procedural models of systemic grammar presents for educational applications. The chapter also describes how my view of the Text as a Critical Object (TACO) has evolved and discusses why the perspectives of this thesis seem important in the context of an increasingly systematised UK higher education sector in which information transfer and skills acquisition appear, more and more, to be prioritised over knowledge and learning. The chapter then describes the constituency for this project and reiterates the research questions for the thesis. These are:

- How can critical and poststructuralist theories be employed to inform a procedure of critical reading and discussion in the university classroom?
- What would such a procedure look like and how could it be used?

The aims, objectives and possible outcomes of the thesis are also collected together and summarised at this point. The chapter concludes with a brief description of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

1.2 Exegetic procedure in Critical Discourse Analysis

This thesis is concerned with exegetic procedure in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). By exegetic procedure I mean both the procedure of critical reading and the procedure of discussion (of these readings) in an educational context. In this thesis these procedural areas are identified as spaces which have not been properly theorised in CDA, or in any of its related variations, such as Critical Linguistics (CL), or Critical Language Awareness (CLA) (henceforth also CDA unless specified). The particular procedural perspective which this thesis presents is one which views the text as a critical object (TACO); that is, as an object having a high level of salience in the construction of social knowledge and meaning. When

the ‘text as a critical object’ perspective is referred to in this thesis it is called the TACO procedure, the TACO framework, or the TACO approach, depending on the context. TACO is an educational procedure for use mainly with students on Arts, Humanities and Social Science programmes in higher education; that is, in any context where the interpretation of meaning may be said to be central to the development of knowledge and learning. I therefore imagine TACO as being usefully applied in for example communication, language, literature, arts, politics, history and philosophy programmes, as well as other courses where texts of various kinds (spoken, written, visual, cultural, historical, political, strategic, mundane, public, journalistic, etc.) are important in some way to the discipline in question.

Apart from the varied applications which the TACO approach might have in a broader disciplinary context, the perspectives which inform this thesis are also premised in part on the belief that a critical approach to language, or meaning construction, should be an important aspect of a university education. It is a central tenet of this thesis that the nature of meaning construction in a society is a phenomenon which it is important to study, because it is through the construction of meaning that social practices, social institutions and ultimately social formations are realised. I believe that a central purpose of a university education should be to give young people the opportunity to ask questions, to exchange ideas and knowledge, to debate and discuss. In today’s information age where representations of meaning are so multitudinous and often contradictory it seems important that people are able to sift the multiplicity of meanings, and truths, with which they are presented in order to be able to establish their own position in relation to them. In this way, by the act of communication, people are entered into a debate about the kind of society which they live in, which also entails consideration of the kind of society they might wish to live in. This is also why many people, including myself, choose to be teachers. They want, through the development of productive knowledge and learning amongst their pupils and students, to make a contribution to how we understand our society. As Kress (1996a: 16) notes:

A curriculum is a design for a future social subject, and via that envisioned subject a design for a future society. That is, the curriculum puts forward knowledges, skills, meanings, values in the present which will be telling in the lives of those who experience the curriculum, ten or twenty years later.

Associated with this type of perspective in CDA has been the view that we live in a divided society where political, economic, and social goods are distributed unequally, and where this distribution is legitimated by language practices which articulate received perspectives on truth and reality. In these circumstances the role of CDA has been to raise awareness of how these perspectives are constructed so as to cause some productive destabilisation of them. In so doing CDA also wishes to contribute to the development of a more open and just society. Part of the reason for writing this thesis is to examine these claims more closely, to reflect on what they mean, and to try to reframe them in the light of relevant perspectives in critical and poststructuralist thinking.

The claims to social justice and equality, and the critique of discursive relations of domination, have been a consistent feature of the work of critical discourse analysts over many years. Amongst these particular mention can be made of Fairclough (e.g. 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 2001, 2003; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) and Kress (e.g. Hodge and Kress, 1979, 1988; Kress, 1989, 1993a, 1996a, 2003), who are notable not only for their theoretical contributions to CDA but also because they have both in their writings argued for a critical approach to language (and meaning) as a necessary educational practice. They have also been influential, Fairclough in particular, in the development since the early 1990s of Critical Language Awareness (CLA) as the specifically pedagogic arm of CDA (e.g. Clark et al, 1987, 1990, 1991; Wallace 1992, 1995, 1999, 2003; Fairclough, 1992b). CLA applies the principles, practices and procedures of CDA to an educational context. The influence of Fairclough in establishing CDA as a field of social enquiry and in developing the theoretical and practical rationale for a pedagogic realisation of CDA are the principal reasons why Fairclough's CDA forms the principal focus of this study.

One of the reasons CDA is itself *critical* is because the explicit connection it makes between critical social theory and the critical study of discourse and society. CDA's understanding of these areas is largely derived from analytical and interpretative perspectives in Marxism, Frankfurt School critical theory and, more recently, poststructuralism (e.g. Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Fairclough has conceptualised this relationship in terms of a three-tier view of social formations: as society, as discourse, and as text (see Chapter Five: 5.2.1). Of these, the first two, society and discourse, are theorised according to a range of perspectives in critical social theory, including among others perspectives derived from the thought of Marx, Gramsci, Althusser, and Foucault. But where *discourse* and *society* are theorised from

the perspectives of critical social theory, the *text* is theorised differently. Here CDA has relied on Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (e.g. Halliday, 1978, 1994). There are two reasons for this. The first is that SFL provides a useful grammatical language of description for labelling and classifying the linguistic features of texts. The second is that through the multifunctional understanding of the text which SFL presents it also provides a procedural framework within which textual analyses can be carried out. This is what has made it attractive as a procedural model for CDA (e.g. Fowler et al, 1979; Fairclough, 1989, 2001; Chouliaraki, 1998; Wallace, 1992, 1995, 2003; Kress, 2003). According to Halliday there are three meaning functions which any text simultaneously performs. These are the 'ideational', 'interpersonal' and 'textual' functions of meaning (see Halliday, 1978, 1994; Halliday and Hasan, 1989; also Eggins and Martin, 1997). The ideational function articulates conceptions of the world and knowledge about the world. The interpersonal function expresses the relationship between the text-producer and the other participants in the communication. The textual function is responsible for organising the ideational and interpersonal functions into a coherent and meaningful whole (a text), and for the linguistic choices which are made in making the text lexically, grammatically and rhetorically cohesive. The functional dimensions of the text correspond to three dimensions of context. These are the field, the tenor and the mode. These contextual dimensions refer to the ways in which different aspects of the context have impacted upon the language of the text. The field refers to what is happening in the context, and the type of social action that is occurring: the practices that the participants are engaged in; the tenor refers to the participants in the action (e.g. writer and reader, speaker and listener) and the nature of their relationship; and the mode refers to how the text is symbolically organised as an event: the role that the language of the text is playing; its rhetorical function and purpose. The mode also includes the channel, i.e. whether the text is spoken or written or both.

While the descriptive framework and procedures of SFL are certainly important, there is something which seems not entirely satisfactory about CDA's reliance on SFL for theorisation of procedure at the level of the text. This is that SFL is not a critical social theory. It is the argument of this thesis that this theoretical difference represents a 'critical' lacuna in the procedural theorisation of CDA at the level of the text. The qualification of being a critical social theory is that it is one which engages with theoretical questions regarding the nature of social being; its ideas and ideologies, its institutions and power structures, its social frameworks and meanings. By inserting itself into the debate about the

nature of reason and truth, knowledge and understanding, in what for many is a post-Enlightenment age, a critical social theory is one which engages in the philosophical discourse of late modern society (cf. Habermas, 1987a; Giddens, 1990; Giddens et al, 1994; Harvey, 1990; Jameson, 1998; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Within the framework of recent western philosophy there are two traditions of critical social theory which interest this thesis. One tradition extends from Hegel through Marx to the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and the other extends from Nietzsche through Heidegger to the poststructuralism of Foucault and Derrida. SFL is not this type of social theory, despite being a socially conscious theory of language. It follows then that if CDA is to theorise critical procedures for the analysis and discussion of texts, and to become 'critical all the way through' (cf. Rajagopalan, 1999), it needs to look beyond the functional categories of SFL and to seek such procedures in the writings of critical social theory. This is something which none of the major traditions in CDA have done. In this process one of the aims of this study is to develop a theorisation of procedure in which an SFL vocabulary becomes more of a linguistic resource in a procedure of exegesis and discussion than what it has been, its organising principle. This study therefore represents a theoretical reformulation of CDA for educational purposes. This is something Fairclough (1999: 80) himself has called for: 'Critical discourse awareness programmes will be concerned to recontextualise this body of research in ways which transform it, perhaps quite radically, into a practically useful form for educational purposes.' This is the objective of this study.

The theoretical perspective of the study is developed via the perspectives of four *critical* philosophers: Foucault, Adorno, Derrida and Habermas, with the last three providing the basis for a theorisation of procedure (Chapter Four). Foucault's importance to this study lies in redefining the nature of criticality in a *critical* discourse analysis for educational purposes (e.g. Foucault 1980, 1989). Foucault also provides, in combination with multimodal and social constructivist perspectives (e.g. Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996; Kress, 2003; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), the theoretical backdrop against which the contributions of Adorno, Derrida and Habermas are presented and developed. This initial theorisation is developed via the review of the literature in Chapter Two. Adorno and Derrida are important to this study because through their thought it is possible to theorise a procedural framework for the act of critical reading. Habermas is important because his perspectives on the public sphere and on communicative action may be utilised to theorise the act of classroom-based discussion over the text. I want to open a dialogue between these perspectives, particularly between

Habermas and Derrida, but also more generally between critical theory and poststructuralism. This study represents a multiperspectival approach (cf. Nietzsche, 1968a; Adorno, 1973; Kellner, 1988; Best and Kellner, 1991, 1997) one which is eclectic but through its practice seeks to demonstrate that competing discourses, ideas and beliefs need not be always incommensurable (cf. Inghilleri, 1996).

By adopting (in part) a poststructuralist orientation in this study I am marking a theoretical break with CDA as it is more usually perceived, as located within Marxist and Enlightenment discourses of emancipation (e.g. Habermas, 1987a). With this in mind I am also presenting this thesis as a critique and reformulation of CDA which continues to have many points of convergence with CDA as it has come to be understood and practised. This study is thus also offered as a dialogue between CDA as a largely modernist project and a range of critical and poststructuralist positions which seem theoretically and educationally relevant to it. Pennycook (1994, 2001) should be mentioned in this context. Although he has not identified himself as a critical discourse analyst, and has been more of a critic of CDA than a supporter, he has argued for a Critical Applied Linguistics (CAL) which is largely poststructuralist in orientation, and for this reason at a theoretical level there are a number of commonalities between his position and the one presented in this thesis. Pennycook's CAL, while useful in this respect, has otherwise been discounted from this study because his vision of a critical applied 'post-linguistics' does not include any indication of how it is supposed to be done. That is, he offers no texts, no framework and no methodology for analysing them (see also O'Regan, 2004). The perspective which is presented of an educational CDA in this thesis is therefore a somewhat different project to the one which Pennycook presents in his work. Pennycook seems too poststructurally 'one-sided' in his approach, too committed to a pedagogy which is not committed to a pedagogy, and so he purposely eschews 'methods', 'frameworks' and 'procedures' in favour of an unspecified and unformulated praxis of 'debate, discussion, argument, dissent' (Pennycook, 2001: 169). This thesis is in some respects a response to Pennycook's lack of specificity, and includes much which he discounts, or neglects, in pursuit of a critical practice.

This thesis is very much grounded in my own practice as a university teacher on communication, language and linguistics programmes over more than 15 years. I have been experimenting with numerous variations of the TACO model for much of this time, but it has only been quite recently that I have recognised the need to develop this perspective

theoretically as well practically, particularly as the more I thought about it, the more it became apparent that the social theory side of textual exegesis was an area which seemed singularly underdeveloped in CDA. I soon realised by investigating this that the question of theory and specifically Marxist social theory was also responsible for a nagging personal discomfiture with CDA, i.e. that it seemed too closely wedded to Marxist emancipation paradigms and that I needed an alternative rationale for the kind of critical analysis I wanted to introduce to my students. I have therefore tried to move CDA onto new theoretical terrain in which key concepts in CDA have been reappraised and then reformulated in ways which change the complexion of CDA and which also impact on the procedures for doing pedagogic CDA with students. One of the practical consequences of this is the attempt to develop an educational framework and procedure for a pedagogic CDA that is more readily usable by university students and by teachers across a range of disciplines, as well as by non-specialists more generally, which I believe does not demand the same sophisticated grasp of systemic grammar which other CDA frameworks seem to require.

For these reasons this study is for much of its length a discursive account of an identifiable theoretical absence in CDA's critical perception of *procedure* as well as a re-evaluation of the rationale for a *critical* discourse analysis. In its later stages, however, an empirical data-driven account of the TACO procedure is presented in order to show what occurred, as well as the problems which arose, when these ideas were applied to a classroom context. The important issue is that the data for this thesis are therefore both *theoretical* as well as *empirical*. Chapters One to Four present the theoretical argument of the thesis, as well as the research methodology. Chapter Five is a transition chapter. It asks how we move from theory to practice in a procedure for critical reading. Chapter Six presents an account of what happened once this move was made. Taken as a whole then, this thesis is not primarily an empirical project, but a theoretical and discursive one. It is a discussion of a theoretical perspective on textual exegesis and how this might be applied to the practice of CDA in a pedagogic context. For these reasons this thesis does not follow the research paradigms of more traditional models of qualitative educational research, where the focus of the research tends to be upon the modes of data collection, the procedures for analysing them, and the 'findings' which these produce (cf. Hammersley, 1998; Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2000). In this respect the design of the thesis has more in common with educational research projects in philosophy and sociology where a more discursive orientation is not unusual (e.g.

Steuerman, 1985; Marples, 1994; Wright, 1995). I hope the nature of this project, and the way I have presented it, will be shown to justify the approach I have taken.

I have started this thesis by laying out, in brief, the principal parameters and interests of this thesis. Prior to revisiting the research questions I wish the thesis to address and presenting a brief summary of the thesis chapters (1.6.1. and 1.6.2), I would like to explain how and why I have arrived at the TACO approach to texts and to discuss in more detail a number of theoretical and educational perspectives which are relevant to the particular conception that I have. First, I will explain how I became interested in CDA.

1.3 Thatcherism: the closure of the social

I owe my own route to CDA to Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990, and to the personal antipathy I experienced towards the ideological perspective of Thatcherism to which she gave her name. Thatcherism denotes a set of beliefs which combines nineteenth-century economic liberalism with a moderately adjusted set of Victorian social values: thrift, patriotism, self-help, hard work, initiative, duty, independence, authority, hierarchy, discipline. In the 1980s and 90s Thatcherism came to epitomise for many social commentators in the UK, and not just those on the political Left, an extreme reactionism and self-centredness which was difficult to reconcile with the more consensual political perspectives of previous British governments since 1945, both Labour and Conservative (see Hall and Jacques, 1983; Hall, 1988; Skidelsky, 1988; Brittan, 1988; Hutton, 1996).

‘Thatcherism’ as it was coined and developed in the years after 1979 involved the complete rejection of the more consensual Keynesian model of social democracy, and its replacement by an individualist Monetarist model of macro-economic management, in which the principal economic variable was not the rate of unemployment, but the rate of inflation, and keeping that as low as possible. Thatcherism also rejected all corporatist styles of governing, seeing them, and Keynesianism for that matter, as synonymous with the socialism of the Eastern bloc countries. Trades unions were brought under control by the introduction of new laws which restricted the right to strike; systems of economic redistribution were discouraged and legislated against in the interests of encouraging people to fend for themselves; individualism and entrepreneurialism for the purposes of private wealth creation were encouraged, and wherever possible, particularly in later years, large public concerns were privatised, often at rates which did not reflect their supposed market value. The manufacturing sector of the

British economy was all but destroyed in the process. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and despite the enforced resignation of Thatcher herself in 1990, Thatcherism as a set of economic and social beliefs became deeply rooted in the British social and political psyche. It continues to cast a long shadow across the British political landscape so that today, when a Labour government is in power, economic policy is still resolutely monetarist.

The point of this discussion is to illustrate that social philosophies and beliefs such as Thatcherism, and those which are attached to other social, political and economic phenomena, such as globalisation for example, are in my view forms of social closure. Their truths are often presented as self-evident, non-debatable, and closed. The discourse of Thatcherism is very much extant in British society today. The truth-certainty with which many people approach the legacy of Thatcherism is one aspect of modern British society which I find the most disturbing. In this perspective the answer has been found. 'There is no alternative,' as Thatcher often said herself. This leads, as with neo-liberal perspectives on globalisation, to a proliferation of 'logics' in which the categories of statements that may be said to constitute a discourse are presented as self-evident truths (cf. Foucault, 1989). The logics of Thatcherism include, amongst others, the sanctity of private property and the family, the rightness of self-enrichment, poverty as largely self-inflicted, nationalism over multinationalism, Englishness over multiculturalism, individualism over cooperation, and capitalism over all other forms of social and economic organisation. These logics manifest themselves linguistically and semiotically across the range of texts which form the 'semioscape' of society: for example, in newspapers, magazines, brochures, news and television programmes, advertisements, music and fashion. Texts in this sense being taken refer to any semiotic material which may be said to convey meaning, and not just linguistic texts.

The logics of Thatcherism coupled, in the 1980s and 90s, with the logics of 'Reaganomics', US foreign policy, and neo-liberal global capitalism made for an increasingly bleak scenario where concepts such as equality, tolerance, cooperation, and social justice were concerned. It was in this context, as a Masters student of Applied Linguistics in the early 1990s, that I was introduced to Critical Linguistics and CDA. I found myself attracted to the political claims which writers in these areas, principally the East Anglian critical linguists (Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew, 1979), Van Dijk (1985, 1993), and Fairclough (1989), made about the relationship between language and the social practices of society. They presented a view of

language as encoding ideological perspectives which conferred legitimacy on the social inequalities and differential power relations which Thatcherism seemed to engender. It seemed to me then, and this remains true now, that this was not just a useful intervention in linguistics, but an exciting one too. Their work also seemed to provide the opportunity I was looking for to take a stand against the logics and truth certainties of social philosophies and practices which also engendered forms of social closure; for example, the discourses of racism, new rightism, and neo-liberal economic development theory. CDA, as it had by then come to be known, suggested an approach to language study which was not only multidisciplinary, combining linguistic analysis with sociological and political analysis, but also held out the prospect of making a critical contribution to social change and enhanced human understanding. Better still, in the work of writers such Wallace (1992), and Janks and Ivanič (1992), who applied CDA models of analysis to education, I found a direct application to my own context of work.

1.4 Theoretical perspectives

1.4.1 CDA and Marxism

Despite the enthusiasm with which I embraced CDA, there were aspects of it which I found problematic. These were in the main twofold. First, although there was an evident Marxist problematic in CDA, this was not clearly developed in the literature. What did it mean and what did it intend? This did not seem sufficiently transparent. I also had reservations about the whole Marxist project itself, which in terms of truth certainties and logics, at least on the part of the 'active' Marxists I knew, did not at the time seem so far removed from Thatcherism, if intellectually and morally more palatable. The other problem was that I found the Hallidayan systemic grammar (e.g. Halliday and Hasan, 1989; Halliday, 1978, 1994), particularly as it was articulated in CDA, overly abstracted for work with the kinds of students that I was teaching. These included at that time intermediate to advanced students on courses in English as a Foreign Language, and speakers of English as a second language doing an undergraduate degree in Applied Language Studies.

I will deal with these issues in turn. First, the Marxist problematic in CDA. This is how Kress (1996a: 15) expresses this idea:

Critical studies of language, Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have from the beginning had a political project: broadly speaking that of altering inequitable distributions of economic, cultural and political goods in

contemporary societies. The intention has been to bring a system of excessive inequalities of power into crisis through the analysis of potent cultural objects – texts – and thereby to help in achieving a more equitable social order. The issue has thus been one of transformation, unsettling the existing order, and transforming its elements into an arrangement less harmful to some, and perhaps more beneficial to all the members of a society.

For the world to change for the better, the way people, groups and institutions think and act need to change as well. This requires changes and perhaps ‘revolutions’ in consciousness, that is, in our understandings of relations between people and between groups of people, in our understandings of the social, economic and political structuring of the societies to which we belong, and in our understandings of the institutions of society, both within the state and within the economy, through which such structuring occurs. Insofar as these changes have as their interest the development of a ‘better world’, they are more than just an interest in change, they are an interest in emancipation. It is through the Marxist problematic that CDA’s emancipatory interest is articulated (O’Regan, 2001, 2002).

But if one asks what emancipation is supposed to mean in CDA, then Kress’s response to this question is amongst the more explicit of those to be found in the literature. More usually references to the idea of an emancipatory interest are expressed in more general terms, for example as a need to combat social inequality, prejudice and the abuse of power by dominant groups. Thus, despite the clarity and conviction of Kress’s statement, a certain vagueness lingers as to the theoretical complexion of the emancipatory interest in CDA, particularly with respect to social theories of emancipation. This lack of clarity was a source of discomfort to me. I often asked myself what I was practising CDA for. What was it that I was trying to achieve with my students? What, if anything, was I suggesting that they do? My lack of a clear understanding of these questions was reinforced by my perception of Marxism at that time. I was conscious of a doctrinaire attitude which seemed to be attached to the whole notion of being ‘a Marxist’. That is, it seemed to require a certain unquestioning commitment to ‘the cause’, to the overthrow of capitalism and the ‘bourgeoisie’, otherwise you were a ‘reformist’ or, worse still, a ‘bourgeois’. I realised that I was not convinced by classical Marxist diagnoses of what was wrong with society, in that they tended to be based in my view on rather fixed and narrow rationalisations of notions such as ‘class’ and ‘ideology’, ‘the base’ and ‘the superstructure’, which seemed rather dated and overly prescriptive, and yet which many of the Marxists I knew adhered to. I had not at that point

passed through the phase which Raymond Williams aptly describes in *Marxism and Literature*:

But now that I knew more of the history of Marxism, and of the variety of selective and alternative traditions within it, I could at last get free of the model which had been such an obstacle, whether in certainty or in doubt: the model of fixed and known Marxist positions, which in general had only to be applied, and the corresponding dismissal of *all other kinds of thinking* as non-Marxist, revisionist, neo-Hegelian, or bourgeois. (Williams, 1977: 3; emphasis added)

A principal reason for undertaking this thesis has been to examine in more detail these ‘other kinds of thinking’, in order to see how I might also pass the point which Williams describes. In many respects this thesis is a description of this process.

1.4.2 CDA and Poststructuralism

For the purposes of this thesis poststructuralism is viewed as the discursive subset of postmodernism (Best and Kellner, 1991), defined as a view towards the social as heterogeneous, indeterminate, fragmentary, differential, contingent and multiperspectival (Harvey, 1990). Postmodernism is thus the umbrella term within which poststructuralism is the element that is devoted to discourse, and hence to texts and textual analysis. There are a number of reasons for introducing poststructuralist paradigms into CDA. Firstly, to do so is in keeping with an antipathy towards the types of social closure and truth certainties which have been noted for ideologies such as Thatcherism, and for at least some of the more classical articulations of Marxism. Both postmodernism and poststructuralism share this antipathy. Rather than truth certainties, postmodernism and poststructuralism prefer to talk in terms of *truth claims* (Foucault, 1980, 1984) thus short-circuiting the foundational notion of truth which truth certainty would seem to imply.

Habermas too (1984, 1996), from a rather different perspective, refers to *validity claims*, which does not seem an incompatible terminology, except that for Habermas the question is how validity claims may be *redeemed*, or proved. Whichever term is adopted, truth claim or validity claim, if it is applied to a written text for the purposes of interpretation, the meaning of the text immediately becomes a touch more slippery and less definitive. Because of the emphasis on claims rather than certainties, multiple or, better still, *differential readings* then become admissible to the task of interpretation. Differential readings here implying that the

readings will relate to a similar theme but will not necessarily be identical. Multiple readings, on the other hand, may possibly be misconstrued as implying an interpretive ‘free for all’.

One of the more problematic aspects of CDA, and one which has been a focus of criticism for applied linguists (e.g. Widdowson, 1995a, 1996, 1998, 2000a; Hammersley, 1996; O’Halloran, 2000; Cameron, 2001), has been the impression that CDA permits access to the truth of the text: a ‘final reading’. In my view the predilection in CDA towards seemingly final readings of texts is a function of CDA’s attachment to Enlightenment paradigms of reason and truth, and a lack of reflexivity within the discourse practices of critical discourse analysts themselves (see Chapter Two: 2.3.1). The Enlightenment search for foundational bases from which to make statements of truth, and to make absolute judgements about, for example, the type of society it would be best to live in – *a final reading of the social* – has led in my view to the unintended privileging of *a final reading of the text*. In other words a reflex reading in which the analyst’s interpretation seems privileged over the non-specialist’s. One of the objectives of the educational CDA of this thesis is to turn this process on its head, so that rather than privileging a singular interpretation of the text, the aim is to ‘release’ a possible *differentiality* or *constellation* of readings (Adorno, 1973), so that they may be compared and discussed.

The *constellations* perspective which informs the TACO approach is explained in Chapter Four. The term comes from Adorno (ibid) who argues that in order to develop any understanding of an object, such as a text for example, it is necessary to look at it from more than one perspective, i.e. from a *constellation* of viewpoints. If this insight is applied to classroom discussions over texts, it is possible to see how these are *constellatory* in the sense that Adorno describes, because they are an amalgam of differential views of the same object. Through the release of readings in a classroom students engage in an intersubjective process of information exchange. In this thesis this exchange of information between class participants is part of what makes a classroom a place of knowledge formation and learning, and from this a second TACO principle is derived, that it should contribute to processes of *discursive knowledge formation*. I have partly borrowed this term from Habermas, who talks of ‘discursive will formation’ within the discursive space of the public sphere (Habermas, 1992; see also Chapter Four). Discursive will formation refers to the process by which citizens form a *public* opinion.

1.4.3 CDA and Systemic Functional Linguistics

The second problem I have alluded to in using CDA in the classroom relates to the conceptual difficulty of the systemic grammar which CDA employs, particularly in relation to the functional classification of texts and the impact this has on exegetic procedure, as well as the complexity of the terminology itself. The difficulties which SFL presents for educational practice have been noted by many CDA practitioners, not least by Fairclough (2003: 6), who has referred to its ‘forbidding technical terminology’ and the problems this presents for wider application. Similar observations have been made by Wallace (1992, 2003), Toolan (1997) and Fowler (1996: 8-9), who notes that systemic grammar can be both ‘abstract and difficult’, and that its concepts ‘need to be explained more clearly’ if students are to do effective critical work with texts.

CDA applications have largely been premised on the need to acquire at least a basic understanding of systemic grammar. For example, Wodak (2001: 8) states that ‘an understanding of the basic claims of Halliday’s grammar [i.e. SFL] and his approach to linguistic analysis is essential for a proper understanding of CDA.’ The problem with this perspective is that it necessitates an audience which wishes to be trained in systemic grammar, and which has the time available to do this. I am not convinced that systemic grammar is the *absolute* requirement which Wodak appears to suggest, although some knowledge of language forms is certainly necessary. To teach systemic grammar takes time and commitment, for teachers as well as students, and in the educational contexts I am familiar with time is often in short supply. Moreover, to make SFL a prerequisite of doing CDA would seem both to narrow its potential audience, and to narrow CDA itself, by reifying CDA in terms of SFL. The dependence on SFL also seems to run counter to the recognisable ethos in CDA that critical language awareness should be *a public good*, i.e. something which as many people as possible can have access to. In Fairclough’s (1999: 71) words: ‘as the shape of the new global social order becomes clearer, so too does the need for a critical awareness of language as part of people’s resources for living in new ways in new circumstances.’ In these circumstances systemic grammar has a potential ‘limiting effect’, by making CDA more specialist, esoteric, and less accessible. While some metalanguage is unavoidable, it does not seem essential that this must come from the descriptive procedural categories of SFL. It ought to be possible to undertake critical work with texts in other procedural ways, and this is one of the key themes which this thesis explores. My own view

which was noted earlier is that SFL is best placed as a linguistic resource within a theoretically reformulated critical framework. This perspective is central to Chapters Four and Five.

1.5 Key influences on this approach

1.5.1 The formation of the text as a critical object (TACO)

When I first started experimenting with an alternative, more simplified, framework for doing CDA, it was called treating the text as a *cultural* object (O'Regan and Clark, 1996), rather than as a *critical* object. The change to *critical* is a fairly recent development. One reason for the change is that the term *critical* seems more in accordance with taking a critical approach towards texts. It fits well with *critical* discourse analysis and *critical* theory for example. With regard to the TACO acronym, the inspiration for this lies in an article by Ray Williams (1986) in the *English Language Teaching Journal* entitled 'Top Ten Principles for Teaching Reading'. In this article the tenth principle is that 'using a text does not necessarily equal teaching reading' (ibid: 45). Williams notes that texts in EFL teaching can be used for many different purposes and generalises these into two main categories: Text as a Linguistic Object (TALO) and Text as a Vehicle for Information (TAVI). In TALO texts are analysed for their linguistic characteristics in order to provide contextual examples of such things as tense usage and lexical collocation in relation to a particular topic. It is thus a method for building up the learner's knowledge of lexis, grammatical form and use. In TAVI the text is used for the development of 'appropriate cognitive strategies which lead to the learner reconstructing the author's original message' (ibid: 45). In this role the text is exploited for its pragmatic content; for example through comprehension questions about it. TACO, in its then cultural form, seemed a suitable extension of Williams' terminology. As it was originally devised, the Text as a Cultural Object referred to how texts function as traces of and clues to the dominant beliefs of the society, or culture, of which they are a product. The text was thus a vehicle for garnering cultural (and ideological) knowledge about society through discussing a text's salient features, and this was how it was used on the courses that I taught.

While I have preferred 'critical' to 'cultural' for the reasons just given, a more significant reason for abandoning the latter is because the term 'cultural' no longer captures for me the nature of the interpretative perspective which is my principal concern, that is, of critical exegesis as a type 'discursive mapping' and 'problematism' of the text. By this I mean

that the aim of treating the text as a critical object is to map discursively and, *if it seems possible*, to problematise the text by deconstructing its ‘preferred reading’. ‘Discursive mapping’ refers to the practice of critical description and interpretation of the text (see Chapters Two, Four and Five). ‘Deconstruction’ refers to the practice of problematising the apparent intended meaning of the text, the ‘preferred reading’ (see Chapters Four and Five: 4.3.4 and 5.3.3). The preferred reading refers to how, from the perspective of a critical reader, the text seems to want to be read. The term is derived from Hall (1990: 134), who uses it to refer to how ‘the different areas of social life appear to be mapped out into discursive domains, hierarchically organised into *dominant* or *preferred meanings* ... a pattern of ‘preferred readings’” (emphasis in original). Although Hall is not using this notion to refer specifically to texts, its use in this study is not dissimilar to the way he employs it in relation to ‘discursive domains’, especially as texts are central to the construction of such domains (see Chapter Two: 2.3.2-2.3.4). Eco (1992: 144) refers more specifically to ‘a minimal paradigm of acceptability of an interpretation’ in the reading of texts, and Derrida (1988: 146) to ‘a strong probability of consensus in the interpretation of texts ... [a] minimal consensus’ (see Chapter Four: 4.3.3 and 4.4.3). The term ‘preferred reading’ also appears in CDA; Janks and Ivanič (1992: 307), for example, use this term to refer to how ‘all texts work to ‘anchor’ some meanings in preference to others.’

In this section I have described how the TACO approach originated; in the next section (1.5.2) I present a view of UK higher education which locates this perspective in relation to developments in this sector over the last two decades, and explains why such a perspective seems important to the educational context in which I work.

1.5.2 Criticality and knowledge production in higher education

Universities have always been centres of knowledge production and dissemination but it has only been over the last twenty years or so that universities have become *mass* educational centres of this kind. Since the mid-1980s British universities have witnessed an unprecedented government-led expansion with even greater numbers of young people entering university than ever before. This ‘massification’ of the university has come to be viewed as desirable and necessary by politicians, employers, media commentators and by universities themselves. The reasons for this vary, but from the perspective of this thesis some major themes stand out. These include the collapse of the Keynesian post-war settlement and the rise in the late 1970s of monetarist neo-liberal discourses in tandem with

the discourses of globalisation. These developments have been accompanied by moves towards what has been called a 'post-Fordist' society based on flexible accumulation (Harvey, 1990; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1999).

Where Fordism was based on mass production, under flexible accumulation this is eschewed in favour of niche production (and consumption), particularly of high-status symbolic goods, and immersion in the society of the spectacle, of image, entertainment, and lifestyle (cf. Marcuse, 1964; Debord, 1970; Adorno, 1991; Baudrillard, 1994; Kellner, 2003a). In labour processes and labour markets flexibility is the key watchword of the era. In technology the information revolution has turned information itself into a highly valued commodity. Businesses require accurate and up-to-date information so that they can respond instantaneously to changes in economic conditions, consumer tastes and fashions, and the moves of their competitors. The emphasis on speed and instantaneity, not only in business and IT, but also in diversionary leisure pursuits such as computer gaming and channel hopping while watching TV, has fed a desire for instant gratification and stimulus, where the new is quickly the old, to be replaced by something else. It is not unusual in these circumstances to hear manufacturers describe their commodities as either 'the latest', 'the newest', 'the most advanced' or 'the most exciting', in order to keep one step ahead of what is perceived as almost imminent and ever-impending obsolescence.

In this ephemeral 'fast capitalist' environment (Gee, 1994; Cope and Kalantzis, 2000) universities too have eagerly joined the rush to be the first in developing still newer and more advanced technologies. The ruthless commercialisation of knowledge production in universities through the pursuit of research grants and corporate endowments, coupled with the systemic imposition of competitive research targets through, for example, the Research Assessment Exercise in the UK have impacted profoundly upon the nature and purposes of the university itself. Universities are now expected to play a performative role in society by acting as service providers to the needs of corporate capital; through research, particularly into new technologies, and more broadly still, through training people in the skills which they will need when they enter employment. In this process the university has been marketised.

The marketisation, or commodification, of the university (Fairclough, 1995, 1996a, 2000a) has many features. An increasing number of UK universities, for example, now have a modularised curriculum. The university where I work is one of them. According to Barnett (1997: 172): 'in modularisation we are witnessing a *national* attempt to create internal

markets within individual universities; and we are also seeing institutional attempts to generate more of an *external* market for a university's teaching services' (emphasis in original). He continues:

In the marketization of higher education, what counts as knowing changes. There are epistemological qualities to these systemic changes. Markets bring about a transformation in the realisation of knowledge. They do so because the pedagogical relationship necessarily changes. The pedagogical exchange in a market situation is that of supplier to consumer; and the pedagogical transaction becomes one of consumption. (Barnett, *ibid*: 172)

For Barnett, now that students are paying for a service 'knowledge is reduced to mere information' which, especially in the credit-unitised matrix of the modular system, can then be banked and accumulated until sufficient units have been saved towards a qualification (*ibid*: 173). In these circumstances the downgrading of knowledge to information leads to the potential closure of knowledge forming practices in the university. Knowledge is about exploration, contestability, questioning and creating distance from the given. It is about claims to truth and frameworks of truth, and the grounds upon which those claims are made. When knowledge is reduced to information these routes to knowledge are closed in favour of a one-way exchange of information, from supplier (teacher) to consumer (student). It is not just a closure of knowledge, it is also according to Barnett: 'a closure of mind' (*ibid*: 175).

This is accompanied by an emphasis on the behaviourist discourses of transferable skills and learning outcomes as elements of competency-based education and training or 'new vocationalism' (Usher, 1997). New vocationalism broadens the nature of the information exchange in the modular contract to include transferable skills. These are the skills which it is assumed employers in corporate businesses wish students to develop during the course of their university studies, so that when they enter employment they will make efficient employees and be more readily adapted to the demands of working for businesses in the global market place. At the university where I work five main skills categories are specified as compulsory for all the programmes which the university runs. These are *Self Management, Learning and Teamwork Skills, Communication, Problem-solving, and IT Skills*. Critical perspectives on knowledge are nowhere mentioned. Through the linkage of assessments to learning outcomes, a university requirement for all modules, backward linkage to transferable skills is ensured.

This thesis is concerned with the educational study of texts in the university classroom and the procedures, theoretical and practical, which seem relevant to this. This concerns in part the development of a critical awareness of discourse, understood as the study of the discursive construction of social life, and the role(s) which texts of different kinds play in this construction. This includes for example the public statements of political leaders, media organizations, and business corporations; the texts of newspaper articles, advertisements, news and documentary programmes; and, of equal interest, the cultural texts of our everyday lives: the leaflets, notices, tickets, brochures, programmes, licenses, voting registration forms, labels, and products, etc., which form part of our lived textual experience. All these ‘texts’ make claims about how they are supposed to be received and understood, they all have ‘preferred readings’, and for this reason they are all potential ‘critical objects’. To treat the text as a critical object is to subject such texts to a close and rigorous ‘reading’, and for these readings to be intersubjectively exchanged within the discursive space of the classroom. This type of interpretative *discursive* exchange is central to my view of learning and of the university classroom as a communicative space where individuals may come together to share their opinions and ideas. Above all it is a discursive space where the objects of discussion *should* be examined from unfamiliar angles and positions which ‘cut across’ the object’s everydayness, and which make its ‘familiarity’ seem strange. In this way, ‘new ways of seeing’ and ‘new ways of knowing’, with *discourse* and with *texts*, may be encouraged and developed (cf. Carter, 1997; Best and Kellner, 1991, 1997).

The wish to encourage a discursive attitude to learning is an important one for this thesis, and is a view which is shared by many writers in CDA and by ‘critical’ philosophers such as Derrida and Habermas. Derrida (1995, 2002) for example has argued that philosophy be enshrined in our educational institutions as a means of opening up future possibilities in the institutions of society: ‘the point is still to seek out new themes that are taking form and that call for new kinds of competence’ (Derrida, 1995: 110). Similar arguments have been made for CDA by Billig (1991), Myerson (1997), and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999). They concur that universities need to take on the role of public spaces where argumentation and dialogue can be encouraged and developed around the public discourses of society. This is also the view of Habermas (1992: 446) who envisages a public sphere in which there is ‘a discursive formation of opinion and will.’ From an educational perspective, Kress (1995: vii-viii) has said that it is important to work out ‘productive futures’ and for children and young people ‘to learn new literacies;’ and Seller (1997: 92) has argued that ‘the crisis in knowledge

in higher education is less about *what* texts to read ... more about *how* to read' (emphasis in original). Seller speaks for this study when she says this. If young people are to develop the kinds of critical competency which these writers and thinkers describe, then my aspiration is that it should be part of a university education that young people have the opportunity to experience courses in which they are exposed to a practise of discursive intersubjective learning, or knowledge formation, over texts. The approach to reading which is described in this study represents my own contribution to this.

1.5.3 The constituency for the thesis

I noted at the start of this chapter that the TACO approach is intended for use with a potentially broad range of undergraduate and postgraduate student groups in the Arts, the Humanities and the Social Sciences. I would like to believe that the TACO framework which this thesis introduces may be adapted to many contexts by teachers who are willing to take a little time to familiarise themselves with its principal features. For example, teachers of communication, language, literature, art history, design, politics, history and philosophy. I think the TACO framework may have an application in all these contexts, in ways which need not also be language dependent. I can envisage a TACO framework in which there is no linguistic language of description, but perhaps one based on architecture, on space, on art, or on design. The common element in this is that for all these disciplines *texts* of various kinds are important in some way to the work that they do.

I am not a teacher of all the disciplines listed above, although I have been a student of some of them. As far as my present teaching context is concerned, I have been developing the TACO framework in connection with the modules I teach on the English Language and Linguistics and Communication Media and Culture degrees at my university. One module in particular, which is called *Critical Discourse and the Media* and which ran for the first time in 2003-2004, was based on the ideas and concepts of this thesis. This module provides the basis for the data and material presented in Chapter Six. In addition to this course I have also introduced versions of the TACO framework to undergraduate students as part of introductory courses in discourse analysis at undergraduate and postgraduate level. In most cases, including the *Critical Discourse and the Media* course, the students concerned were not familiar with critical approaches to reading texts, and had little or no experience of discourse analysis more generally.

The following section concludes Chapter One of the thesis. Here, the research questions for the thesis are stated and a brief summary given of each of the chapters. This ties together the main points which have been made in sections 1.2 to 1.5.

1.6 Research questions and chapter summary

1.6.1 Research questions

My research questions are repeated here in order that we may be reminded of what these are, and also in order to summarise the main aims, objectives and hoped for outcomes of the thesis which have been set out at various points in this chapter.

- How can critical and poststructuralist theories be employed to inform a procedure of critical reading and discussion in the university classroom?
- What would such a procedure look like and how could it be used?

These questions involve the following related aims:

1. To develop a procedural framework for doing pedagogic critical discourse analysis with texts;
2. To undertake a selective 'rewording' of key aspects of an SFL language of description for such a framework;
3. To exemplify an approach to Critical Discourse Analysis in which critical and poststructuralist theoretical perspectives have been brought into dialogue;
4. To produce a reading framework for treating the text as a critical object which students as well as non-specialists can apply to any type of text, either independently or collaboratively.

In the light of the foregoing discussion a fifth aim can be added to these four:

5. The development of *discursive knowledge formation* in the classroom.

If these aims can be achieved, I hope they will have the following outcomes:

- The formulation of a framework for critical reading and discussion which is theorised according to procedural exegetic and discursive perspectives in critical social theory. (1 and 3)
- That SFL is made a linguistic resource in this framework rather than its organising principle. (2)
- That this framework might be used in a wider educational context than the one in which I work. (4)
- The maintenance of a discursive space in the lifeworld. (5)

In summary, I wish to offer a procedural reformulation of CDA for educational purposes. As part of this process I also wish to address some important questions about reading texts and to present some insights into the nature of teaching and learning with them with the kind of framework which this study describes. In addition, I hope that this procedure may be useful to teachers, facilitators and trainers in educational and other public contexts. Finally, I would like through this thesis and through my work to contribute to what Habermas (1992) terms the maintenance of a critical publicity in the lifeworld (Chapter Four).

1.6.2 The chapters of the thesis

The earlier chapters of the thesis (Chapters Two, Three and Four) deal primarily with the theoretical development and justification of the text as a critical object, with understandings of the text, of discourse and what it means to be *critical*. These chapters also describe the theoretical orientation of this study towards procedures of reading and discussion. In Chapter Two a discussion of the TACO approach to criticality is undertaken in the context of a review of the literature and a consideration of the concepts of power, ideology, discourse, and text in CDA. Relevant to this chapter is an appreciation of a multimodal approach to discourse (e.g. Kress, 1993a, 1993b, 1995, 1996a, 2000a, 2000b; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). For now I will be working with more linguistic definitions of both these terms (e.g. Stubbs, 1983; Widdowson, 1996; Cameron, 2001). *Discourse* is therefore understood as 'language in use' and *text* as a written or transcribed instance of language in use. Chapter Three considers the methodological perspective of this thesis in relation to its theoretical and empirical content by describing the multiperspectival as well as ethnographic orientations which inform the research as well as explaining how and why these were selected. Relevant to this chapter is a discussion of relativism versus truth in the pursuit of knowledge in critical social research. This chapter bridges the space between the more general theories and concepts of Chapter Two and the specific theories and concepts which are introduced in Chapter Four. Chapters Four, Five and Six represent the main body of the thesis. Chapter Four discusses the theoretical contributions of Adorno, Derrida and Habermas to a theorisation of classroom-based exegetic procedure and discussion. This chapter, in combination with Chapter Two, addresses the first research question on how critical and poststructuralist theories may be employed to inform a procedure of critical reading and discussion in the university classroom. Chapter Five and Chapter Six address the second research question by explaining what the TACO procedure looks like and how it could be used. Chapter Five discusses two sample reading frameworks in CDA and shows how TACO both relates to and is different

from these frameworks. Chapter Six is the empirical part of the thesis. It describes an undergraduate module which I teach at Oxford Brookes University, called *Critical Discourse and the Media*, which was designed for the purposes of introducing a TACO approach to students on Communication, Literature, and Linguistics undergraduate programmes at my university. This chapter includes a description of the rationale for the course, a sample discussion of a text from a TACO perspective, and discussion of transcript data based on the same text. A week-by-week description of the module along with samples of the kinds of materials that were used, students' assessments, and student feedback on the course appear in the appendices. Chapter Seven draws the main points of the thesis together and evaluates the critical reading model which this study proposes in the light of the empirical data.

Chapter Two

Critical Approaches to Discourse, Knowledge and Text

2.1 Chapter synopsis

This chapter reviews the literature of CDA. At the same time it also represents a preliminary stage in responding to my research question of how critical and poststructuralist theories can be employed in theorising a critical exegetic procedure with texts. It examines critical approaches to discourse from the perspectives of Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The first part of this discussion will concern a number of shared themes between them. These also apply to Critical Language Awareness (CLA) as the pedagogic expression of CDA. In this chapter these themes are identified as interests in criticality, language, ideology and power. This discussion leads to closer definitions of discourse and text as they are understood in this thesis. The main point of the discussion will be to demonstrate that the version of criticality which is immanent to CDA is too narrow because it is based on a restrictive *negative* view of power as domination and inequality (cf. Fowler, 1996; Van Dijk, 1993, 1996, 2001, 2004; Fairclough, 1989, 2001; Janks, 2000). I argue for a movement away from a negative view of power and the adoption of a more *positive* conception of power as knowledge (cf. Foucault, 1980; Pennycook, 2001). The effect of this is to redefine what is meant by a critical practice. It is in this redefined sense that the text in this thesis is understood as a *critical* object. A corollary of this perspective is that I wish to deflect CDA away from an emancipatory discourse which carries within it in the implication of social reconciliation and universal consensus and put in its place a more open-ended critical questioning of the social.

2.2 Critical approaches to discourse

2.2.1 Critical Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Language Awareness

Critical Linguistics was the popular generic term in the 1970s and first half of the 1980s for what later became known as CDA. CL resulted from the collaborative and individual work of Robert Hodge, Gunther Kress, Tony Trew, and Roger Fowler who applied systemic functional models to the analysis of discourse and texts. Their interest was to develop a model of linguistic analysis based on SFL which would highlight how language, in the form of texts, encoded social meanings, or *ideologies*, which were manipulative of their readers (e.g. Fowler et al, 1979; Hodge and Kress, 1979; Fowler, 1985, 1996; Kress, 1985, 1989).

CDA while evolving separately from CL is effectively a development of it by another name. Many writers are associated with CDA (e.g. Van Dijk, 1985, 1993, 1994, 2001, 2004; Wodak, 1989, 1996a, 1996b, 2001; Van Leeuwen, 1993; Toolan, 1997; Birch, 1989, 1996) but chief amongst these has been Norman Fairclough, and it is with him that CDA is now mostly associated. Fairclough has published extensively on CDA over the past 15 years (Fairclough 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 2003; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) and it is in large measure due to his output that CDA has become the preferred term for this type of textual enquiry.

CLA has evolved as the pedagogic arm of CDA. A number of writers are associated with this field (e.g. Wallace, 1992, 1995, 1999, 2003; Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič and Martin-Jones, 1987, 1990, 1991; Clark, 1993; Clark and Ivanič, 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Ivanič, 1990; Janks, 1993a, 1993b, 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001). These writers apply critical discourse principles in varying ways in their teaching. Wallace, for example, applies CDA to the English as a Foreign Language classroom; Janks has developed critical language awareness materials for secondary schools in South Africa; and Clark and Ivanič, both jointly and independently, have published widely on critical approaches to academic literacy. What unites their work is a belief in the efficacy of critical approaches to the study of language, largely proposed by the earlier as well as contemporaneous work of critical discourse analysts like Fairclough (1989) and Kress (1989) and a desire to apply this in an educational context. In the discussion which follows the focus will be on CL and CDA as the principal traditions in critical studies of discourse. One way of categorising the interests of CL and CDA is to locate them in relation to a set of shared themes:

1. an interest in being ‘critical’

⇒ understood as a critique of the discursive construction
of unequal relations of power and domination

2. in social theory and in discourse an interest in:

⇒ ideology and truth
⇒ discourse and power
⇒ discourse and knowledge
⇒ discourse and social institutions
⇒ discourse and texts
⇒ discourse and multimodality
⇒ discourse and emancipation

These themes are addressed in the sections below (2.2.2-2.3.5).

2.2.2 CDA as a critical practice

In this section I discuss CDA's interpretation of critical practice or *criticality* as the struggle against the discursive construction of unequal relations of power and domination (e.g. Fairclough, 1989, 2001; Van Dijk, 1993, 2001, 2004). I wish to challenge this notion of criticality in favour of one which sees critical practice as a *discursive mapping* and *problematization* of texts.

My own view of criticality is derived from my belief that we live in a world in which social life and social knowledge are textually constructed, where access to knowledge (scientific, humanistic, artistic, political, historical, anthropological, medical, etc.) depends on that knowledge being discursively *realised*, i.e. by it being incorporated into some system of meaning relations. This system of meaning relations may for example be written, spoken, colour-coded, textured, signed, musically composed, or gestured. The realisation of meaning in this view is not just a function of written or spoken instances of discourse, but is a property of other meaning modes as well. Meaning creation is therefore multimodal (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, 1998), and in this thesis wherever such systems of meaning may be said to exist, either individually or in combination, these are understood as *texts*.

A critical practice in this perspective is therefore one which explores how such texts contribute to the discursive construction of social life. It also involves examining how different discourses operate and how through the texts which they inhabit they construct their claims to truth. Criticality in this perspective thus suggests much more than 'to criticise', 'to object', or 'to oppose', although it may mean these things as well. *Criticality*, or a *critical practice*, is the process by which we explore our enmeshment in the textual realisation of social life. That is why I have opted for the term *discursive mapping* to describe it. The notion of discursive mapping as part of a redefined *critical* approach to texts is derived from a variety of sources. First of all, CL, CDA, and CLA have all in their own ways involved some form of discursive mapping, but without calling it this and without conceptualising it in the terms described here. More substantive influences have been Foucault, Jameson, Kress, Pennycook, and Derrida.

Foucault's contribution to discursive mapping is his perception of *positive power* (Foucault, 1980, 1981a, 1991; see 2.3.2 below). This is my own term. In this study I argue that criticality has been too narrowly employed in CDA as a means of critiquing inequality; i.e. as *negative power* (cf. Fowler, 1985, 1996; Van Dijk, 1993, 1996, 2001, 2004; Fairclough, 1989, 2001; Janks, 2000). By redefining criticality in terms of *positive power*, it becomes possible to think of criticality in another way, as the study of the discursive construction of social formations through texts. Criticality in this sense then becomes part of a wider semiotic project of making a discursive inventory of the social, or what Kress (1996a: 18) refers to as an 'ethnography of representational resources.' In Kress's view this follows from the need to deal with and interpret a society that is passing through a new period of technological, economic and representational transformation. The work of Kress and Van Leeuwen in the field of multimodality (e.g. 1996, 1998) is representative of such an ethnography.

Jameson (1984a, 1988, 1998), in a similar manner, refers to the need for 'cognitive mapping' in what he sees as a 'period between two stages of capitalism,' a largely national economic capitalism and a new, but not fully restructured, multinational and global one (Jameson, 1998: 48). In this transition period Jameson says that it is necessary to teach methods for mapping the changing social totality. He draws an analogy with the work of Kevin Lynch, who: 'suggests that urban alienation is directly proportional to the mental unmappability of local cityscapes' (Jameson, 1988: 353).

... the dialectic between the here and now of immediate perception and the imaginative or imaginary sense of the city as an absent totality – presents something like a spatial analogue of Althusser's great formulation of ideology itself, as 'the imaginary representation of the subject's relationship to his or her real conditions of existence.' (Jameson, *ibid*: 353)

In order for us to have any sense of our existential location according to Jameson we need to have a cognitive sense of the totality so that some connection can be made between our individual lived experience and the 'absent totality' around us. Jameson's extrapolation of Lynch's spatial analysis to the social structure is thus a means of personal 'triangulation' as well as political action in a rapidly changing 'late modern' social environment: 'the incapacity to map spatially is as crippling to political experience as the analogous capacity to map spatially is for urban experience. It follows that an aesthetic of cognitive mapping in

this sense is an integral part of any socialist project' (ibid: 353). Cognitive mapping as a type of spatial late modern politics is an appealing term, but Jameson offers few clues as to strategies for doing it. CDA and Multimodalism have much more obviously fulfilled this role in the sense that Jameson describes, although he does not refer to them in his work.

Pennycook (1994: 128), for his part, refers to how discourses 'in effect "map out" what can be said and thought about what they define as their respective domains' so that in his context 'Language teaching becomes a process of ... linking the process of learning a second language to a pedagogy that seeks to question how we understand ourselves as we do' (ibid: 132).

Derrida too operates an implied notion of discursive mapping, not just in terms of the procedure of deconstruction, but also as a principal function of the teaching of philosophy.

The principal function which the teaching of philosophy serves is to enable people to become 'conscious', to become aware of exactly what they are saying, what kind of discourse they are engaged in when they do mathematics, physics, political economy, and so on. There is no system of teaching or transmitting knowledge which can retain its coherence and integrity without, at one moment or another, interrogating itself philosophically, that is, without acknowledging its subtextual premises; and this may even include an interrogation of unspoken political interests or traditional values. From such an interrogation each society draws its own conclusions about the worth of philosophy. (Derrida, 1988: 114-115).

If the first element in a TACO perspective of a critical practice is discursive mapping, the second element is that a critical practice should seek to problematise the texts which it subjects to analysis. It does this by comparing the *textuality* of the text, i.e. its immanent discourse features (Halliday and Hasan, 1976), with the *preferred reading*: the reading which accords with the way the text seems to want to be read and understood (Hall, 1990; see also Eco, 1992; Derrida 1988). I argue in Chapter Four that in any critical reading of a text we should proceed on the basis of comparing the textuality of the text with its apparent preferred reading. Possible inconsistencies may then be detected between the preferred reading and other possible meanings immanent in the fabric of the text. In this way, the perception which the text has of itself – its preferred reading – may be problematised.

A corollary of a 'mapping' and 'problematization' approach to critical practice is that, in this kind of approach, texts and the discursive features of texts, are not viewed as necessarily 'suspicious' (cf. Wallace, 1995). In my view the perspective of criticality in CL, CDA and CLA (henceforth CDA unless specified), i.e. as a process of uncovering covert mechanisms of power and domination 'behind discourse' (Fairclough, 1989: 55), has resulted in an excess of *suspicion* being transferred to the critical reading of texts. CDA has in my view been insufficiently reflexive about critical reading and has not articulated, in an effective way, what is meant by a critical practice in the process of reading or what its parameters are, i.e. what is *critical* about a critical reading? What is it that is being *done* in a critical reading that makes it critical? Are all texts critically suspect? In the TACO approach the process of how a reading is *critical* is made more explicit because of the relationship which the approach constructs between the discursive mapping of the text and a *deconstructive* or problematising reading. These represent two complementary dimensions of treating the text as a *critical* object. In TACO both the discursive mapping of the text and its possible deconstruction are understood as *critical practices*. This means that the mapping of the text in a TACO approach is not just the preface to a critical reading, i.e. the prefatory work which needs to be done before the critical work can begin; in a TACO approach the mapping process is *already critical* (see 4.3.4 and 5.3.3). What this means is that criticality does not depend *solely* on the critique of relations of domination and inequality, although these do not disappear. It also means that *critical* reading is not automatically *suspicious* reading. That is, it does not begin from the premise that the text has something to hide. This might be an *outcome* of a critical reading, but it is not its *purpose*.

Where the practice of discursive mapping in the TACO approach overlaps with the practice of critical reading in CDA is that the text is subjected to a close reading which seeks to understand how the text is constructed both *textually*, as a lexical, grammatical, rhetorical, and visual event, and *socially*, in terms of the ideas and social assumptions on which it depends for interpretation. Where discursive mapping differs from CDA is that it does not view this as a process of uncovering mechanisms of ideological manipulation and mystification which are largely hidden in texts and which require 'procedures of unveiling or demystification' (Fairclough, 1989: 141). Fairclough explains his view of a critical practice in the following manner:

By 'critical' discourse analysis I mean discourse analysis which aims to explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (Fairclough, 1995: 135)

This perspective of a critical practice is complemented in CDA by a wish to contribute to the creation of a more equitable and just society. Fairclough for example states that one of his aims is 'to help to increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation' (Fairclough, 1989: 1). Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew (1979: 2) for their part wish to make 'a contribution to the unveiling of linguistic practices which are instruments in social inequality and the concealment of truth.'

Other writers expressing a similar perspective include Van Dijk (1985, 1993, 1994, 2001, 2004) and Wodak (1989, 1996a, 1996b, 2001). Van Dijk makes the following distinction between 'critical' and 'non-critical' approaches:

Unlike other discourse analysts, critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit sociopolitical stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles, aims, both within their discipline and within society at large ... Their hope, if occasionally illusory, is change through critical understanding. (Van Dijk, 1994: 252; parenthesis in the original)

Wodak, in answer to the question 'What are the aims of critical linguistics?' notes that 'Generally speaking, we want to uncover and de-mystify certain social processes in this and other societies, to make mechanisms of manipulation, discrimination, demagoguery, and propaganda explicit and transparent' (Wodak, 1989: xiv). To be critical in CDA is therefore to take a politically committed stand against dominant and dominating modes of thinking and practice, particularly where these present themselves as being naturalised features of social existence. The aim is to deconstruct the familiarity of these dominant and dominating relations in order to expose the largely hidden ideological mechanisms by which they function.

2.3 Socio-theoretical and exegetic issues in CDA

In the following sections (2.3.1 and 2.3.2) my own orientation to the above-mentioned points, as well as towards other critical issues important to CDA, is outlined. These relate to the second set of themes which were listed earlier:

- ideology and truth
- discourse and power
- discourse and knowledge
- discourse and social institutions
- discourse and texts
- discourse and multimodality
- discourse and emancipation

2.3.1 The differentiation between ideology and truth

The concept of ideology is a fairly problematic one for CDA because (i) more than one meaning of ideology is employed; and (ii) because the way ideology is employed also has the consequence of suggesting a privileged access to the truth, particularly in texts. I will discuss these issues in order.

There are at least three different meanings of ideology in use in CDA. This is perhaps not surprising as there is little unanimity generally regarding what ideology means. Eagleton (1991), for example, lists no less than nineteen varieties of meaning for ideology. Williams (1977: 56), on the other hand, provides a shorter summary which can serve as a guide for this discussion. He identifies three common versions of the concept which are popular in Marxist writing. According to Williams, these are, broadly:

1. a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group;
2. a system of illusory beliefs – false ideas or false consciousness – which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge;
3. the general process of the production of meanings and ideas.

To these can be added:

4. the linguistic mystification of reality.

In CDA the concept of ideology appears as 1, 2 and 4. It does not usually appear as 3. In sense (1) ideology is presented as the political viewpoint of a group. For example, Marxist ideology, conservative ideology, feminist ideology, class ideology. As Williams notes senses (1) and (2) are often combined so that (1) becomes the dominant or 'hegemonic' ideology for the rest of society (cf. Gramsci, 1971, 1988). The illusory nature of ideology in sense (2) is therefore operationalised as the naturalisation of a dominant mode of thinking and practice across society. The 'false' appearance of normality which this engenders may be contrasted with a true reality in which the illusion projected by the dominant mode of thinking is lifted and people can see their true interests. In these ideal circumstances people would also be able to see why the dominant mode of thinking and its associated practices were illusory and false, and why, therefore, they had been labouring under a 'false consciousness'. This vision of ideology is similar to Habermas's notion of 'distorted communication', which in principle might become 'undistorted' in a hypothetical ideal speech situation (Habermas, 1984).

In CDA the unification between senses (1) and (2), as a hegemonic false consciousness, is the principal manner in which the concept of ideology is presented. With regard to sense (4), the linguistic mystification of reality, it is related to the false consciousness of sense (2) in the respect that the principal means by which these ideologies circulate is via (written and spoken) texts.

Expert knowledges/discourses come to us via texts of various sorts which mediate our social lives – books, magazines, radio and television programmes, and so forth ... As everyday lives become more pervasively textually mediated, people's lives are increasingly shaped by representations that are produced elsewhere. Representations of the world they live in, the activities they are involved in, their relationships with each other, and even who they are and how they (should) see themselves. (Fairclough, 1999: 75; parenthesis in original)

Although Fairclough refers to a social world which is textually 'mediated' rather than 'realised' (see 2.3.4), the approach of this study agrees with the observation which he is making. Where differences arise between Fairclough's approach and mine, these are on the question of ideology and what it seems to mean, as well as to imply.¹ The first point is that it

¹ The issue here being not only what ideology is supposed to signify in CDA, but that by adopting a certain view of ideology, CDA also implies an attitude towards political practice and what that should entail, i.e. a Marxist view of emancipation.

is not always clear which version of ideology is being appealed to; writers in CDA use all three simultaneously (senses 1, 2 and 4), i.e. as a perspective, as an unconscious hegemony, and as linguistic mystification. Second, there is confusion over the extent to which ideology is something that is consciously manipulated by dominant groups in society or whether it is mostly or even entirely unconscious. For example, for Hodge and Kress (1979: 6) ideology 'involves systematic distortion in defence of class interest,' suggesting intention. Similarly, Van Dijk (1994: 250) says that we must 'focus on the elites and their discursive strategies for the maintenance of inequality.' Fairclough (1989: 86) too states that 'There is a constant endeavour on the part of those who have power to try to impose an ideological common sense which holds for everyone.' For Fowler and Kress (1979a: 186) on the other hand 'these processes tend to be unconscious for most members of the speech community, for much of the time;' and for Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 27) they 'are domination-related constructions of a practice which are determined by specifically discursive relations between that practice and other practices.' There seems to be little consistency in these views, as well as insufficient discrimination between different uses of the term 'ideology' itself.

A third problem arises over how we are supposed to be able to identify hegemonic ideology in texts (sense 2) if it is something that we are unaware of and presumably cannot see. Fourth, if hegemonic ideology can be isolated and identified this seems to imply that it is possible for the critical analyst to overcome the burden of unconscious hegemony, to stand outside ideology and to see 'truths' which others cannot see. These issues have caused a certain amount of controversy for CDA (e.g. Widdowson 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2000b; see also Hammersley, 1996; Pennycook, 1994, 2001; Cameron, 2001).

In CDA there are differences of opinion on whether ideology is understood as a false consciousness which can be contrasted with true knowledge. Fowler for example distances CL from the false consciousness description of ideology:

Critical linguists have always been very careful to avoid the definition of ideology as 'false consciousness', making it clear that they mean something more neutral: a society's implicit theory of what types of objects exist in their world (categorisation); of the way the world works (causation); and of the values to be assigned to objects and processes (general propositions or paradigms). These implicit beliefs constitute 'common sense', which provides a normative base to discourse. (Fowler, 1996: 10-11)

Fowler's summary of ideology in this extract is a helpful one because it presents a more discursive perception of the social formation by directing us to ask how and why we construct the world as we do. This seems quite close to the discursive mapping approach which was introduced earlier. However, there are other instances where critical discourse analysts have been less circumspect about the idea of false consciousness. Hodge and Kress for example give the following description of false consciousness:

... language, typically, is immersed in the ongoing life of a society, as the practical consciousness of that society. This consciousness is inevitably *a partial and false consciousness*. We can call it ideology, defining 'ideology' as a systematic body of ideas organised from a particular point of view. (Hodge and Kress. 1979: 6)

Here, ideology is at once sense (1) and sense (2) from the earlier classification, although there seems to be some ambiguity and tension in this definition between the ubiquity of false consciousness and its apparent manipulation and projection by a particular class or group. Fairclough and Wodak also present an explicit, albeit qualified, false consciousness view of ideology:

Ideologies are particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation ... Ideologies are often (though not necessarily) *false or ungrounded constructions of society*. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 275; parenthesis in original; emphasis added)

CDA, contrary to what Fowler says, has also not adhered to a largely neutral conception of ideology. There are many instances of statements of the type that ideology is implicated in 'class structure, class conflict, class interest' (Kress, 1985: 29); in 'consolidating and manipulating concepts and relationships in the area of power and control' (Fowler, 1985: 61); in 'discursive strategies that legitimate control, or otherwise naturalise the social order, and especially relations of inequality' (Van Dijk, 1994: 254); in 'how language contributes to the domination of some people by others' (Fairclough, 1989: 1); and is 'a mystifying effect of unequal relations of power on language' (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 5). These are not neutral conceptions of ideology and seem far removed from the more considered assessment of Fowler.

The main problem with the conceptualisation of ideology as false consciousness, rather than as the perspective of a class or group, is that it implies a differentiation between ideology and true knowledge. On this account inequality and domination are ‘wrongly’ justified by ideology which allows these phenomena to be ‘falsely’ viewed as natural and inevitable. Ideology according to this logic thus obscures truth by naturalising unequal power relations. This further implies that critical discourse analysts have a grasp on what that truth is, and this puts them in the position of articulating truths on behalf of those who are unable to see them, in which they seem to be able to lift themselves above the haze of ideological relations. I do not think that critical discourse analysts really think like this, but within the conceptions of ideology which are present in their work they have opened themselves to the accusation that they do. CDA has a problem in relation to ideology because of this, but also more significantly because it ‘infects’ critical discourse analysts’ readings of texts to the extent that they give the impression of speaking from ‘outside’ ideological, discursive and textual relations; that is, from a position of truth.

On the one hand, the problem is one of reflexivity and not being sufficiently reflexive about one’s own discursive practices when presenting analyses of texts, so that critical readings are sometimes presented in a manner that suggests ‘truth’ rather than ‘interpretation’, and ‘explanation’ rather than ‘exploration’. This has provided CDA’s critics (e.g. Widdowson (*passim*; O’Halloran, 2000) with a great deal of ammunition for attacking CDA, despite having little or no appreciation of the theoretical concepts and issues which are involved and on which, at their own admission, they are often ‘not competent to judge’ (Widdowson, 1995b: 516). On the other hand, the problem is also one of an attachment in CDA to an emancipatory discourse, or ‘emancipation problematic’ (O’Regan, 2001, 2002). As Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič and Martin-Jones (1991: 44) put it: ‘The assumption is that consciousness is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for social emancipation, and it is this assumption and commitment to emancipation which underlie the notion of making language awareness critical.’

There are many references of this type in the literature of CDA (see 2.3.5). My reason for mentioning them is that emancipatory discourses contain within them a perception of the social in which a full accounting and explanation of the totality may be rendered, and a final reconciliation and rational ordering achieved. In this thesis this perspective is discounted in favour of a more open-ended and less ‘decided’ view of the social, albeit one that is I believe

also critical. The attachment of CDA to an emancipatory discourse is the second principal reason why, in my view, the presentations of critical analyses of texts in CDA sometimes give the impression of being ‘final’ as opposed to provisional, exploratory, interpretative or problematising readings of texts, and this is despite assertions to the contrary. For example, ‘The aim is to problematise the apparent transparency and self-evidentness of the text by reconstructing the generally ‘forgotten’ processes which underlie it and give it values’ (Clark et al, 1991: 46). Also, Fairclough (1992a: 28) has stated that ‘texts may be open to different interpretations depending on the context and on the interpreter.’ However, we must also set this beside a procedural attitude to the text in the CDA of Fairclough in which ‘*explanation*’ follows ‘description’ and ‘interpretation’ in the critical analysis of texts:

Now it is true that CDA has given particular focus to explanatory connections between texts and social relations of power, and therefore to questions of ideology. And it is true that this emphasis comes out of the particular political conjuncture within which CDA emerged and reflects the political commitments of its practitioners. (Fairclough, 1996b: 50)

Fairclough makes these quite revealing admissions in response to Widdowson’s (1995a) accusation that critical discourse analysts construe texts as having unique interpretations. He seems to concede that both explanation and political commitment are primary motivations in exegesis and therefore allows into this discussion the implication that CDA’s readings of texts are aimed at uncovering truths.

In relation to Widdowson’s specific accusation regarding unique interpretations, the first point to note is that although Fairclough maintains vehemently that there are diverse interpretations of texts: ‘Critical discourse analysis ... is committed to, and dependent upon the assumption of diversity of interpretation of texts’ (p. 51), this is contextualised in terms of *general readers of texts* and not in terms of critical discourse analysts: ‘it is important to take account of the ways in which interpreters interpret texts if one is properly to assess their political and ideological effectiveness’ (Fairclough, 1996b: 51; 1992a: 136). Here, Fairclough does not seem to be talking about himself as an interpreter but interpreters in general.

The second point is that Fairclough responds to Widdowson's charge of partiality by arguing that Widdowson operates according to the fiction that his linguistics is somehow neutral and value-free: 'What Widdowson is offering here is a version of the classical liberal distinction between ideology and science' (Fairclough, *ibid*: 52). I agree, but this in itself still does not address whether critical discourse analysts like Fairclough are presenting final readings of texts in their analyses. Indeed, by privileging explanation over interpretation and making this the final stage in a procedure of critical discourse analysis, the implication is that the critical discourse analyst *is* making a judgement of truth about the text, in which the text's ideological falsity and mystification is transcended and overcome, and a final reading imposed or at the very least implied.

As an illustration of what I mean by a 'final reading' I have chosen an extract from a discussion of a text by Fairclough (1995) which is, coincidentally, also the object of a negative account of CDA by Widdowson (1995a). It is therefore also a useful demonstration of how CDA has made itself vulnerable to these kinds of attacks (see also O'Halloran, 2000). In his analysis Fairclough focuses on two separate text fragments in the South African editions of 'Time' and 'Newsweek' magazines. Both fragments relate to a student demonstration during the apartheid period which resulted in many of the students being killed by the South African police and army:

Fragment 1

Exactly how and why a student protest became a killer riot may not be known until the conclusion of an elaborate enquiry that will be carried out by Justice Petrus Cillie, Judge President of the Transvaal.

Fragment 2

Frightened and perhaps in real danger of their lives, the police simply leveled their carbines and Sten guns and fired at point-blank range.

Fairclough comments on the first fragment that the key expression is *killer riot*, and that this carries the implication that it is the students rather than the police and army who are responsible for the deaths that resulted. According to Fairclough our background knowledge 'tells us that police and army don't riot students do, *riot* implicitly puts the responsibility onto the students' (Fairclough, 1995: 196). The fragment on which Fairclough is commenting is from a book about linguistic analysis by another author. In this other work the author

suggests that *killer riot* has the further implication that black Africans are naturally disposed to violence. The other author is quoted by Fairclough as saying: ‘‘African barbarism’ seems to be lurking in the wings once more’ (ibid: 195). For Fairclough it is ‘the unusual collocation of *killer + riot*’ which does this, and this ‘indicates how readers *might be* pointed in an interpretative direction which evokes the ‘African barbarism’ script’ (ibid: 196; my emphasis). Thus far, this seems reasonable enough as *an interpretation*. This still isn’t good enough for Widdowson who, using Fairclough’s own words, questions whether ‘the collocate of *killer* always denotes something ‘whose nature is to kill’’ (Widdowson, 1995a: 144). Here I feel Widdowson becomes somewhat pedantic. He refuses to allow that this is an interpretation and therefore that this reading is a *possible* reading rather than one that is ‘final’. In relation to the second fragment Fairclough has the following to say:

Downing [the other author] notes that police fear is strongly emphasised, which ‘could not but mitigate the regime’s responsibility’. The emphasis on police fear is achieved textually by topicalising *frightened*, i.e. putting it at the beginning of the sentence as one of a pair of ‘minor’ clauses without finite verbs. The other minor clause, *perhaps in very real danger of their lives*, is striking in its modality: there are two contradictory reporter assessments of the danger, *perhaps* constructing it as **no more than a possibility, whereas *very real* in effect cancels out this nod in the direction of journalistic circumspection.** This indicates how **in mitigating the regime’s responsibility, the report manages to nevertheless appear to be cautious and circumspect.** A third linguistic feature worth noting is the word *simply*, a ‘hedge’ which implies absence of malicious intent or premeditation, and comprehensible human error. What, *indeed*, is the significance of choosing *the police simply leveled their carbines and Sten guns and fired at point-blank range*? It strikes me that **the former, along with the initial minor clauses, embeds the shooting in a police-centred narrative which mitigates it.** (Fairclough, 1995: 196-97)

I have highlighted a number of Fairclough’s comments in **bold** because in these cases Fairclough seems to have moved from interpretation to explanation. In other words, there seems insufficient suggestion in Fairclough’s discourse that this is an interpretation and problematisation of the text, rather than a final reading.

Widdowson (ibid: 145-6) is quick to swoop on what he sees as a confirmation of partiality and prejudice, and of Fairclough presenting interpretations as though they were truths, and in

this case he does seem to have a point. He suggests alternative interpretations of the significant features which Fairclough has noted:

The word *perhaps* might be taken to imply an uncertainty that the police were actually in real danger of their lives and so call into question the legitimacy of their action, but Fairclough dismisses it ... as put in only for the sake of appearances.

Simply, on the other hand ... according to Fairclough ... *does* represent an ideological position. Why these two words should have such radically different implications and why *simply* should carry this heavy weight of significance we are not told ... one might find evidence to suggest, with equal plausibility, that the use of the word here implies that the police behaved with callous indifference.

One might plausibly argue that reference to carbines and Sten guns makes specific how heavily armed the police were, and that saying that these were *levelled* suggests deliberate and controlled movement ...

One might suggest too that this is borne out by *point-blank range*, which is a phrase commonly used to refer to callous and deliberate violence against a defenceless victim. On this account the choice of words does not reflect favourably on the police at all. But Fairclough does not notice these things.

(Widdowson, 1995a: 145-6)

Fairclough leaves himself open to this kind of criticism by being insufficiently circumspect in his own reading of the text. For example, by imputing that he knows why certain items have been chosen over others. This carries the implication that he is party to what the journalist who produced the report was thinking at the time he or she wrote it. Since it is not possible for Fairclough to know the mind of the text producer, he puts himself in the position of claiming more than he has warrant for. Rather than focusing his attention on what the text *seems* to be saying and problematising its construction from this position, Fairclough instead presents an analysis that suggests a focus on what the report *is* saying, and this is evidenced by the emphatic use in his own discourse of unhedged present participles and present simple truth statements.

- *perhaps constructing it* as no more than a possibility
- *very real* in effect **cancels out** this nod in the direction of journalistic circumspection
- **in mitigating** the regime's responsibility, **the report manages** to nevertheless appear to be cautious and circumspect
- *simply*, a **'hedge'** which **implies** absence of malicious intent or premeditation, and comprehensible human error
- It strikes me that the former, along with the initial minor clauses, **embeds the shooting** in a police-centred narrative **which mitigates it**

If Fairclough had made it clear from the start that this was his *interpretation* of the text, this might not matter so much, but he does not. He *does* say 'it strikes me' in the concluding sentence of his analysis, but this seems marginal to a discourse which, in my view, gives the overall impression of a final reading. Implied final readings of this type are quite common in mainstream CDA and serve to undermine Fowler's assertion that 'there is not necessarily any true reality that can be unveiled by critical practice' (Fowler, 1996: 4). The emphasis on ideology as a type of false consciousness, the imputation of manipulative intent without qualification to the producers of texts, and the attachment to a discourse of emancipation make the implication that there *is* a true reality to be unveiled difficult to avoid.

My own view, which I owe to Foucault (1980, 1981b, 1984, 1989; see also Pennycook, 2001), is that the ideology/truth distinction in CDA must be abandoned in favour of a conception of ideology as a discourse or set of discourses oriented to social closure. A discourse oriented to social closure is one which is absolutely certain of its truth, and the rightness of its truth. If given the opportunity, this type of discourse will exercise that truth as an organising principle, and will do so via the systematic suppression of alternative points of view. Historically, when such discourses have been given free reign, they have invariably been accompanied by the application of terror. The Spanish conquest of Mexico under Cortés in the sixteenth century and the destruction of the Incan civilisation was carried out for example under the slogan 'For God and Profit'. The discourses of 'liberty, equality, and fraternity' of the French revolution soon gave way to the organised terror of the *Committee of Public Safety* in which over 300,000 people lost their lives. The strict application of the dictum of 'revolutionary conscience' by Lenin's secret police, the *Cheka*, in the years immediately following the Russian revolution of 1917 also saw the summary arrest and execution of many thousands of people on the grounds that they were 'bourgeois elements',

and therefore a threat to the revolution. In 1939 the 'revolutionary conscience' of the *Cheka* was to be found in the '*lebensraum*' policy of Nazi Germany, in which Hitler's Death's Head units were sent into Poland with the order to kill as many Polish men, women, and children as possible so that the process of gaining for the German Aryan race the 'livingroom' it needed to propagate might begin. To these events, and the discourses which inspired them, can be added, in the 20th and 21st centuries, names like Auschwitz, Manchuria, Vietnam, Cambodia, Guatemala, Palestine, Chile, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Sudan. All of these places have at one time or other been the object of discourses such as 'The Final Solution', 'The Domino Effect', 'Year Zero', 'The Jewish Homeland', 'Operation Enduring Freedom', 'The War on Terror' etc., in which a view of truth has been exercised as an organising principle. Discourses which are oriented to social closure are therefore discourses which desire to impose their truth on the world and to organise and interpret the world according to that truth.

By adopting a conception of ideology as a discourse or set of discourses oriented to social closure it is possible to distance ideology from its inverse association with the idea of foundational truth, and therefore from the implications of foundational truths as organising principles. This lack of distancing has been one of the main problems with the CDA view of ideology (cf. Pennycook, 2001). CDA has sought to critique ideology from an apparent position of truth, conceived principally in terms of a discourse of emancipation. By reformulating ideology as a discourse oriented to social closure, ideology is no longer articulated as being in 'virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth' (Foucault, 1980: 118; see also Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982).

... the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false' (Foucault, 1980: 118).

In other words, the point is to examine how different discourses make claims about truth and how they seem to construct the world in the way that they do, rather than whether they are telling the truth or not. For Foucault it is not possible to decide this because we are not able to stand outside discourse. By framing it in this way, ideology is no longer conceived according to the Marxist model as a hidden power operating in the interests of a specific

social class, or negatively as ‘the imaginary relationship of individuals to the real relations in which they live’ (Althusser, 1971: 162), in the delusional sense of this definition. Instead it becomes multiplied as sets of discourses belonging to a myriad of social groups, all making truth claims. Foucault thus mainly rejects the term ideology because of its connotations in respect of a fundamental truth, not because he does not think there is such a thing as ideology. Discourse and ideology can be competing terms for Foucault so long as ideology means ‘perspective’ and not ‘false consciousness’. Discourse and ideology can therefore be viewed, in a simplified manner, as types of perspective, and this is the position which I am adopting in this thesis. The main points of this discussion are presented in *Fig. 1*.

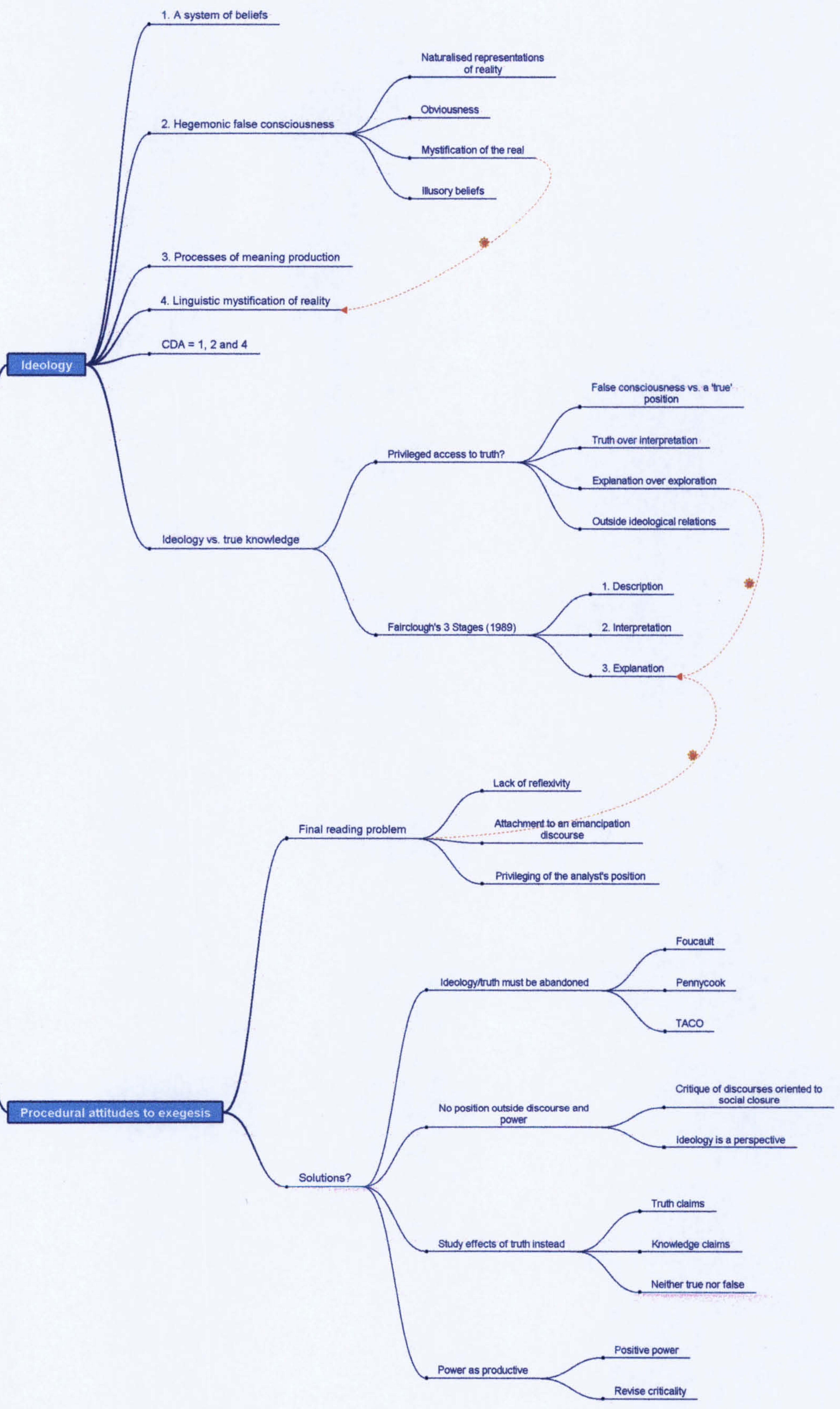
In the following sections (2.3.2, 2.3.3, and 2.3.4) I use Foucault’s (1980, 1989) conception of discourse, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) conception of multimodality, and the social constructivist discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe (1985, 1990) in developing a perspective towards discourse and the text in which critical analysis is based on a productive understanding of power as knowledge forming, i.e. as *positive* (cf. Foucault, 1980; Pennycook, 2001), rather than as oppressive or *negative* as it seems to be in CDA (see 2.3.2). Adopting an approach to power as productive rather than simply negative has implications for the perspective taken in this thesis towards notions of ideology, truth, knowledge and discourse. An important issue in this context is how the development of an understanding of power as productive affects the idea of a critical practice and what that might entail.

2.3.2 Power and Discourse or Power/Knowledge

At the start of this chapter I listed a set of shared themes in CL, CDA and CLA of which the implied distinction between ideology and truth was the second theme. Closely related to the question of ideology and truth, are the concepts of power, knowledge, and discourse, and the *institutional* and *society forming* relationships which exist between them. These therefore correspond to the second, third and fourth themes which I have identified for CDA: discourse and power, discourse and knowledge, and discourse and social institutions.

CDA operates with a view of society as dominated by relations of power and ideology. As we have seen, ideology in CDA, when it is expressed as either false consciousness or as mystification, appears differentiated from a notion of truth, or true knowledge. In its relationship to power, ideology as a hegemonic false consciousness is what naturalises and legitimises unequal relations of power. Power in CDA is thus separated out from ideology,

Ideology and Exegesis in CDA



and ideology from discourse. In this conceptualisation power also has the characteristic of property: there are those who have power and there are those who do not have power (Pennycook, 2001).

Power is used by dominant groups to exercise ideological control, to manipulate discourse for ideological ends. Power holders are in a relation of domination over those who do not have power. Part of the purpose of CDA is to expose these relations of domination so that they might be overcome. This explains the preference in CDA for analysing texts which may be said to naturalise and legitimise unequal relations of power:

There are many domains about which discourse analysis is able to provide relevant insights: the use of sexist discourse, racist reporting in the news media, the enactment of power in and by the discourses of authorities, the inequities confirmed by the prevalence of white discourse styles in multi-ethnic schools, and so on. (Van Dijk, 1985: 7)

The focus on power and inequality is a pervasive one in CDA. Of the texts which are offered for analysis by Fairclough, Van Dijk and other critical discourse analysts as examples of the CDA approach the vast majority seem to have power, power holders and unequal relations of power as recurrent themes. This seems to be a rather narrow focus. In my view there is too much emphasis in CDA on *power as inequality* and not enough emphasis on *power as knowledge*, i.e. as a relationship of life, as part of our existence. The conceptualisation of power as knowledge is central to the work of Foucault (1980, 1981a, 1989, 1991). Foucault represents in the context of this thesis the first point of entry into my initial research question of how critical and poststructuralist theories can be applied to the analysis of texts in the classroom. It is through Foucault's perception of discourse as power/knowledge that TACO perspectives on discourse, text and criticality are in large part established. In contrast to Foucault, CDA adopts a largely Marxist estimation of power, as the domination of one group by another, as exploitation and oppression. It is a negative view of power. As Janks (2000: 177) notes in the context of the relationship of CLA to CDA: 'Critical discourse analysis is used to understand how language works to position readers in the interests of power. It assumes a critical theory of ideology ... *which sees power as negative and productive of inequitable social relations*' (my emphasis). I would like to complement this negative notion of power, with the more ubiquitous and *positive* notion of power which Foucault adopts:

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole of society, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault, 1980: 119)

One of the important features of Foucault's conception of power is its positive productivity. For Foucault power does not have to be repressive, a mode of class domination; neither must it necessarily be conceived as a form of property, possessed by some and not by others. 'Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it' (Foucault, *ibid*: 59). What Foucault means is that our knowledge of the world is produced by the ubiquitous relationships entered into by individuals, as part of 'a net-like organisation':

And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are vehicles of power, not its point of application. (Foucault, 1980: 98)

Power is not in this sense operating to oppress. It is a different kind of power that he is talking about. This power is literally the fabric of existence: '... power produces, it produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth' (Foucault, 1991: 194). In *Power/Knowledge* Foucault implies that he recognises this difference, that power can be oppressive as well as being productive. Power can be '*much more* than a negative instance' (Foucault, 1980: 119; my emphasis); '... power would be a fragile thing *if its only function* were to repress' (*ibid*: 59; my emphasis). It is not that we must give up the notion of negative power as some writers seem to suggest (e.g. Pennycook, 2001). Foucault's aim is not to reject the negative notion of power *per se*, but to reject the negative notion of power which depends upon a Marxist estimation of capitalist domination. Foucault wishes to move the notion of power away from the idea that capitalism and class form the major modes of domination in our lives. This is simply too narrow a conception of power for Foucault; 'power is everywhere' (Foucault, 1981a: 93). This is interesting when set alongside what has been said about ideology. Just as Foucault does not entirely reject ideology, he also does not entirely reject negative power. Negative power exists, but it operates *within* the bounds of power as knowledge.

When Foucault refers to knowledge he is not referring to it as attached to a fundamental truth; it does not enable us to stand outside the problems of society, to judge them, to see where they are going wrong so that they may be put right according to an objective and rationally ordered template. Foucault is talking about a different kind of knowledge. This is not knowledge as a higher plateau of understanding, but knowledge as part of our existence. *Knowledge* with *power* makes us what we are. But power and knowledge must be realised in some way, and for Foucault this realisation depends upon discourse: 'it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together' (Foucault, *ibid*: 100). Power, knowledge and discourse are thus inextricably intertwined. The differences between CDA and Foucault which have been outlined here are illustrated in *Fig. 2*.

If instead of thinking in terms of power *and* knowledge, we think instead of the one permeating the other, and call that 'knowledge', one way of looking at this is to say that for Foucault our social existence is constituted by a discursive collection of 'knowledges': educational knowledge, political knowledge, scientific knowledge, economic knowledge, medical knowledge, historical knowledge, sociological knowledge and so on, which represent *discursive formations* of understanding and truth. These knowledges are divided up in different ways so that there are individuals, groups, organisations and institutions which adhere to and articulate these knowledges. They articulate these knowledges by entering into a range of social practices (e.g. paying subscriptions, attending meetings, issuing communiqués, writing papers, reports, minutes, notes, discoursing, etc.) which reinforce and reproduce their individual and collective identities and thereby the particular knowledge or knowledges with which the individual, group, organisation or institution identifies. Amongst these practices are discursive practices which are centred upon language. At the most basic level these practices consist of sets of statements: 'a group of acts of formulation, a series of sentences or propositions' (Foucault, 1989: 107). This identification allows Foucault to elaborate a *linguistic* view of discourse 'as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation; thus I shall be able to speak of clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse' (*ibid*: 107-8). Taking psychiatric discourse as an example, Foucault is able to make the following observation of mental illness:

... mental illness was constituted by all that was said in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its developments, indicated its various correlations, judged it, and possibly gave it speech by articulating discourses that were said to be its own. (Foucault, 1989: 32)

Mental illness is thus discursively constructed by the statements which are made about it, which give it meaning and 'definition' in the widest possible sense of the word. If this perception is generalised to the rest of society, it is possible then to see how discourse *produces* reality by dividing it up and classifying it into different realms of knowledge or *discursive formations*: '... whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say ... that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*' (Foucault, *ibid*: 38; emphasis and parenthesis in original). In other words, a discursive formation represents the totality of the discursive practices of a social domain. This social domain can be envisaged as existing at three levels of *realisation*. These are *situational* (relating to immediate social contexts), *institutional* (relating to the individual institutional knowledge domains of a society), and *societal* (relating to the overall configuration of situational and institutional domains together). At the situational and institutional levels discursive formations combine discursive practices in the form of 'statements' with 'rules of formation', i.e. conventional ways of doing things (e.g. buying a cinema ticket, ordering food, being interviewed for a job, etc.). Rules of formation are therefore like sociolinguistic rules of appropriacy, they establish what can be said, how, when and where it can be said. At the third level the institutional discursive formations together constitute a 'social formation' or *society*. They also, in the totality of discourse practices which they represent, construct that society's 'regime of truth' or *episteme*:

Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish between true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1980: 131)

Epistemes for Foucault are large-scale conceptual frameworks which underlie particular historical periods. The episteme is in some respects the Gricean cooperative principle writ large (Grice, 1975). The episteme sets the ground rules for discussion to occur. It is *a priori* to truth and knowledge. All discussions and all knowledge are produced with reference to the episteme. This makes disagreements and agreements possible, it allows for debates to occur around truth and falsity. What is unique about the episteme is that its cooperative rules only pertain to itself, they do not cross epistemes. In other words, the foundations upon which

truth and falsity are debated change from one episteme to another so that what was held as true in one historical period might be considered as false in another. This entails two propositions: that outside the episteme there is no ultimate foundation for truth; and that between epistemes the gulf is so wide and so deep as to be unbridgeable (Harland, 1987). Foucault's is therefore also a non-teleological theory of history. Unlike Hegel's theory of history (Hegel, 1998 [1822]; Marcuse, 1986 [1941]) there is no developmental movement to ever higher plateaus of knowledge, understanding, and truth. The principal characteristic of Foucault's theory of history is epistemic discontinuity. One episteme is not necessarily better or 'truer' than another, even though history from Foucault's point of view is a succession of epistemes (Harland, *ibid*).

The three levels of the social formation (the level of social situations, the level of institutions and realms of knowledge, and the societal level of the episteme) can be envisaged as dialectically constituted so that discourse practices (statements) combine with rules of formation to constitute (institutional) discursive formations. These in their turn constitute the societal episteme of an historical epoch, which in turn set the conventions for institutional formations which reproduce statements, and so on. Foucault's view of the social formation is therefore a highly discursive one, although there is some ambivalence in his work as to how discursive he means this to be (see 2.3.4).

Fairclough (1989, 1992a, 1995, 2001) has relied on Foucault for much of his conceptualisation of discourse, particularly Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1989 [1969]) and *The Order of Discourse* (1981b [1970]), and has adopted the term 'order of discourse' in preference to 'discursive formation'. For Fairclough the order of discourse refers to 'the overall configuration of discourse practices of a society or one of its institutions' (Fairclough, 1996a: 70). Owing to the fact that 'discursive formation' was Foucault's original term for this type of configuration, and because it better captures my own *discursive* perception of social *formations*, I have chosen to continue to use this term to describe such configurations.

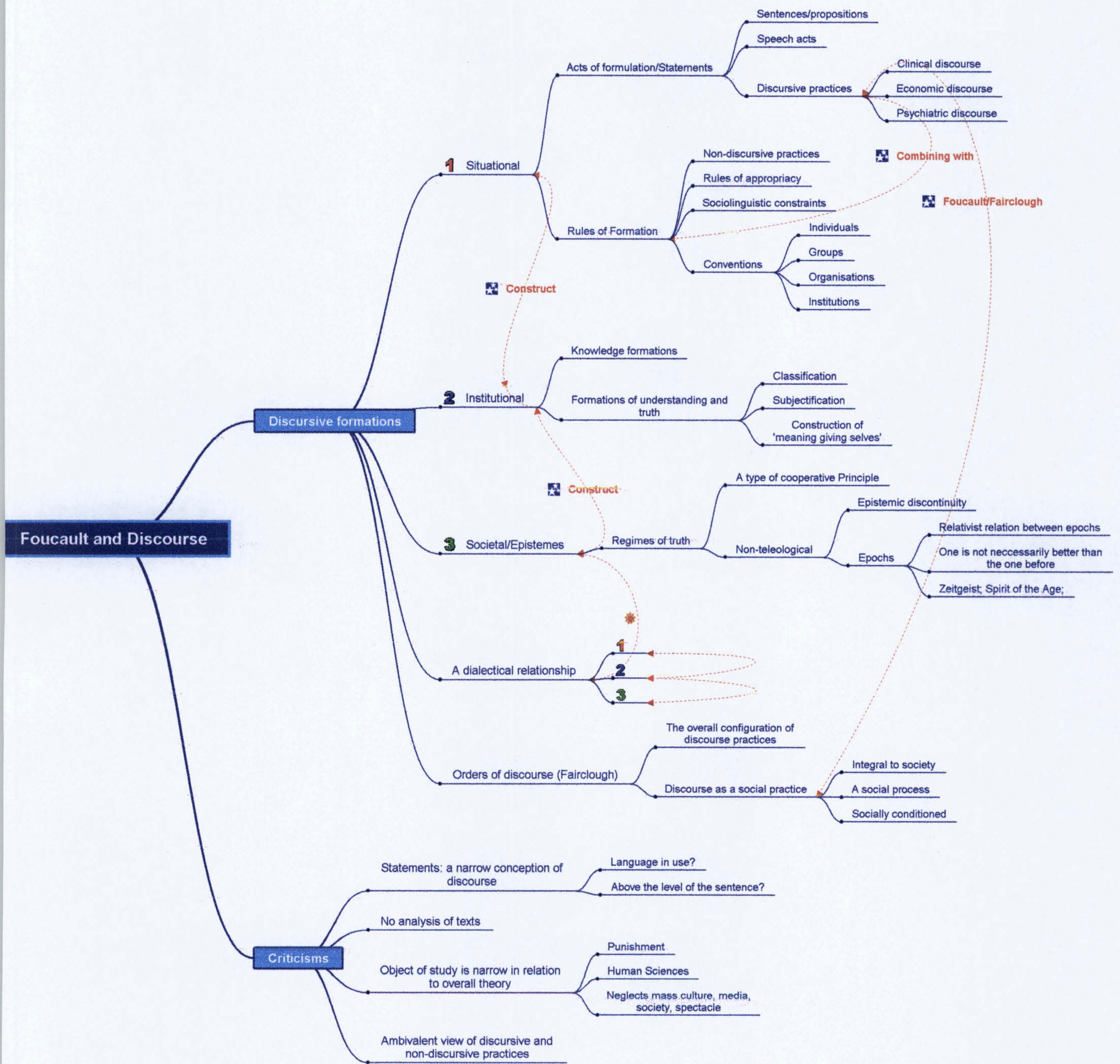
Although Fairclough has drawn extensively on Foucauldian concepts, he is also critical of Foucault, whose view of linguistic analysis seems narrow and somewhat 'dated' in being centred on 'analysing statements' and 'rules of formation' (Fairclough, 1992a: 40). More significantly, 'Foucault's analysis of discourse does not include discursive and linguistic

analysis of real texts' (ibid: 56). Another difference between them, and between Foucault and CDA generally, is that the discursive formations which Foucault describes are those which pertain to how the human sciences and the penal system through history have sought to classify human beings scientifically, and to construct them as 'meaning-giving selves' (Rabinow, 1984: 12). CDA's interests are somewhat wider than this, with a focus on discourses and texts from a wide range of contexts, and which have high cultural salience, such as advertisements, political texts, and newspaper articles. Foucault neglects cultural formation and consumption, media and semiosis, and these are drawbacks to his approach (cf. Best and Kellner, 1991). His objects of study thus seem narrow in relation to the theory he presents. Foucault's discourse perspective is summarised in *Fig. 3*.

2.3.3 Discourse, texts and multimodality: a regime of signification

This thesis is primarily interested in the first and second levels of Foucault's view of discourse and discursive formations, i.e. the discursive practices which make for the institutional realms of knowledge which make up a society. This provides the first part of the discursive backdrop against which the critical reading procedure of this study is developed, and onto which the procedural perspectives of Adorno, Derrida and Habermas are projected. The remaining parts of this backdrop are *multimodality* and a more specified perception of the discursive construction of the social than that which is presented by Foucault. In developing these perspectives, I am also addressing the sixth and seventh themes which were identified earlier: an interest in discourse and texts, and an interest in discourse and multimodality.

In this section I argue for a broader perception of the meaning-making potential of discourse than that which seems to be implied by Foucault's emphasis on linguistic statements and speech acts. It is also more variegated than the notion of discourse which is usually supplied within mainstream linguistics. In discourse analysis, discourse is variously referred to as 'language above the level of the sentence' or 'language in use', although arguments continue regarding what constitutes a good definition (see Widdowson, 1995a; Cameron, 2001). The same descriptive problems and arguments are also attached to definitions of text. As a starting position in this thesis I have preferred the linguistic definition of discourse as 'language in use', and the definition of text as a written or spoken instance of language in use.



These linguistic definitions still do not seem entirely adequate because of their focus on words. Meaning is much more multiple and variegated than a simple focus on words allows. Thus when I am not thinking in strictly linguistic terms, I prefer to take a social semiotic view of meaning (e.g. Barthes, 1977; Halliday, 1978; Halliday and Hasan, 1989; Kristeva, 1986; Hodge and Kress, 1988; Kress, 1989, 1993a, 1996, 2003; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, 1998) and, by extension, of discourse. In this view discourse refers to the making and remaking of meaning in all the semiotic modes which are used by a society. In addition to words, this includes colours, sounds, gestures, symbols, pictures, textures, art, architectural forms, etc. In other words, I take discourse to refer to all the actual and potential signifying practices of a community of sign users. Discourse is thus not simply 'language in use', but 'signification in use'; or to appropriate a phrase from Lash, although he uses it somewhat differently, discourse is 'a regime of signification' (Lash, 1988: 311).

With this definition it is also possible to define more closely what are meant by discourses (plural). Like Foucault (1989) and Kress (1989) I think of discourses as organising themes within the larger frame of discourse; so there is political discourse, medical discourse, legal discourse, educational discourse, musical discourse (pop, rock, rap, soul, reggae, etc.), racist discourse, sexist discourse, and so on. A discourse 'organises and gives structure to the manner in which a topic, object, process is to be talked about' (Kress, 1989: 7). A discourse thus 'determines' what can be said and done in discursive formations. However, this is not a one-way relationship; a discourse is also *organised* and *structured* by these practices. The relationship is a dialectical one. The saying and the doing *reproduce* the form of the discourse which corresponds to these practices.

Relevant to this context is the concept of *genre*. The particular idea of genre which this study employs has been influenced by Kress (1989: 17).

The conventionalised forms of the occasions lead to the conventionalised forms of texts, to specific GENRES. Genres have specific forms and meanings, deriving from and encoding the functions, purposes and meanings of the social occasions. Genres therefore provide a precise index and catalogue of the relevant social occasions of a community at a given time. A few examples of genre are: interview, conversation, essay, sale, tutorial, sports commentary, seduction, office memo, novel, political speech, editorial, sermon, joke, instruction. (Kress, 1989: 17)

Genres therefore contribute to the construction of discourses in discursive formations. Where discourses (medical, legal, political, etc.) dialectically determine what can be said and done in discursive formations, genres refer to how discourses are realised as individual texts. This has the consequence that a genre is both an element of discourse and a type of text. For example, the genre of a political statement arises from political discourse. The statement may exist *in the abstract* as a mode of discursive practice, i.e. a conventional way of constructing a text, and *in practice* as an actual spoken or written text. For example as a statement from the White House or from number 10 Downing Street. Fairclough (2003: 216) calls this a *situated genre* because it is tied to ‘particular networks of social practices.’ Political discourse, medical discourse, and legal discourse are types of discourse in which the political statement, the medical report, and the courtroom cross-examination are *situated genres*. It is this notion of genre, i.e. genre as a type of text, which the framework of this study incorporates (see also Chapter Five: 5.3.3).

Identifying discourses thematically is not to suggest that they are mutually exclusive; they will often overlap, creating *hybrid discourses* (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), and more than one discourse may be present in a text at the same time, thus creating *hybrid texts*. In opting for a broader definition of discourse than is usual in linguistics, I am also opting for a broader definition of text. Following Kress (*passim*) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 1998), I do not think of texts as merely words on a page. All texts are multimodal: they combine a range of semiotic codes in the expression of their meaning. If we take the written text as usually conceived in discourse analysis as a starting point – a newspaper article for example – in addition to the words in the article, there will be a minimum number of other modes present. The text will usually be printed in at least two fonts, one for the headline and one for the rest of the text. The text will be organised into a certain number of columns. It may be that a colour other than black ink on a white background has been used. *The Financial Times*, for example, is printed on pink paper. There may also be a photograph accompanying the written text, and this will be placed in a certain position in relation to the words on the page: to the left, to the right, possibly above or below. Without having exhausted all the possible meaning modes which might be present, it is clear that the text is much more complex than a reliance on the printed word suggests.

The newspaper article as it has been described here is therefore a large, complex sign with many features of ‘salience’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). If discourse is a regime of

signification, then a text is an instance of that regime. We can say then that a text is *a framed instance of the discourse of a community of sign users*. If signification is the making and use of signs, then the people who make and use them are sign users. Amongst the many sign making opportunities open to human beings one is the written text. But as a sign the written text is only one type of sign and one type of text. Colours, sounds, images, shapes, textures, etc., often appearing in combination, can also be texts. It follows from this that all signs are texts. The importance of a multimodal view of discourse is the broadening it gives to Foucault's seemingly narrow notion of discourse as sets of statements.² Foucault's theory of discourse as power/knowledge is made more substantial if a more multimodal conception of discourse is included within it. It also adds a further dimension to Foucault's realisation of power and knowledge in discourse. The realisation of power and knowledge in discourse is properly the realisation of power and knowledge in discourse *and in texts*.

I have said that texts are *framed instances* of the discourse of a community of sign users. The *framing* (Kress, 1993a) or *bounding* (Dowling, 1999) of the text is a social semiotic act. We intuitively frame texts as part of our everyday lives; that is, we impose perceptual boundaries on the object world in order to divide it into manageable 'texts' which we can process. When textual framing occurs in an educational setting, as it frequently does, it is often a more conscious act. Setting textual boundaries is often a function of educational practice because one of the purposes of education is the analysis of social objects: scientific, linguistic, historical, architectural, and so on. The boundaries of these objects need to be set so that the analyst knows what s/he is studying and so that this can be stated for others. This means that if we are to make the text an object of analysis, we need to determine its limits in some way, to say where the text begins and ends. Texts for the purposes of critical reading thus require some material limits. When studying a text it is useful to consider what these material limits are so that we know what it is we are looking at. The framing of the text is discussed further in Chapters Four and Five (see 4.3.4 and 5.3.3).

² Relevant to this context are the following personal communications. It is Kress's view that Foucault's statements should be understood as social/epistemological entities and not linguistic ones: 'It is the implicit practice of CDA – as of other disciplines – that has assumed that they are linguistic' (personal communication). Michelle Lazar has also commented that Foucault's category of statements is not intended literally, but as indicating the semiotic meaning potential of discourse (personal communication). Foucault is much less explicit, and it is difficult to find evidence of this kind of formulation in his work. For myself, Kress is conflating Foucault's 'statements' with 'orders of discourse' and with 'discursive formations'. Lazar's perspective, on the other hand, attributes to Foucault a multimodalism which on my own reading seems to be lacking in his work. See in particular Foucault (1989).

2.3.4 Discursive materialism: Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse

A multimodal conception of discourse seems a useful development of Foucault's linguistic perception of discourse as a set of statements. Discursive practices are no longer confined to linguistic statements but to the range of signs a society uses to make meanings. Discursive formations are therefore large and complex sign structures combining many modalities of meaning and practice. The problem with this perspective is that it has been interpreted as a type of reductive 'linguistic idealism' in which the world and all its social phenomena are reduced to and determined by discourse (Callinicos, 1985; Macdonell, 1986; Best and Kellner, 1991; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). The reductive 'all is discourse' position is often associated with Hindess, Hirst, Cutler and Hussain (1977), who argued that the objects of discourse only existed in discourse, and did not have any existence outside it. I do not wish to suggest this. Like Foucault, I do maintain that there is a distinction to be made between the discursive and the non-discursive. There is a non-discursive world existing outside discourse consisting of structures and institutions, of economic, political and other social forces, as well as forces of nature, and of people constructing and reconstructing their world through their (non-discursive) actions. But there is a definite fuzziness here, because while the non-discursive certainly exists outside discourse, it seems to me that it must be *realised* in discourse.

This is a position which is put forward by Laclau and Mouffe (1985, 1990), who link their discourse theory to that of Derrida (1976) and Foucault (1989). Laclau and Mouffe do not so much reject the distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive, as reject the distinction between discursive and non-discursive *practices*. Laclau and Mouffe (see *Fig. 4*) draw attention to the fact that Foucault makes a distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices which seems at odds with his theory of discourse. For example, he describes society as:

... a heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid. (Foucault, 1980: 194).

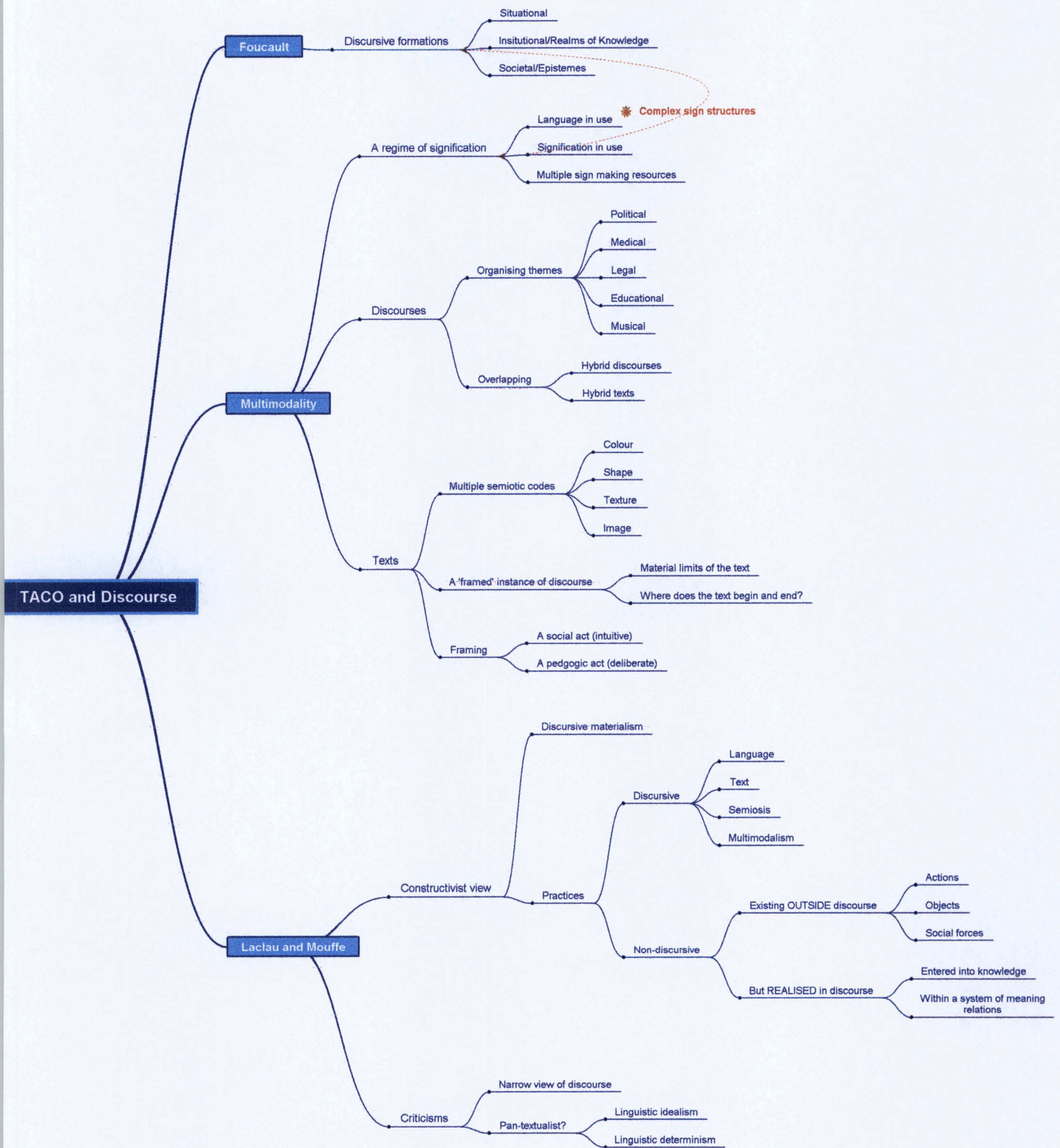
He therefore seems to distance himself from a reductive pan-textualist position in which the whole of existence is constructed in discourse. Laclau and Mouffe attempt to resolve

Foucault's ambivalence over discursive and non-discursive practices by including both the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of social practice – language, people's actions, social forces, etc. – within discursive practices. In other words, they include the non-discursive within the discursive on the basis that the non-discursive could not be realised independently of discourse. Their analysis affirms:

a) that every object is constituted as an object of discourse, insofar as no object is given outside every discursive condition of emergence; and b) that any distinction between what are usually called the linguistic and the behavioural aspects of a social practice, is either an incorrect distinction or ought to find its place as a differentiation within the social production of meaning, which is structured under the form of discursive totalities. (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 107)

Their point then is that what are usually taken to be part of the non-discursive realm: actions, material objects, institutions, techniques, technological forces, the economy, consumption and production patterns, physical actions, and so on, only emerge as such, and become part of human knowledge, through being *realised* in discourse, i.e. by being entered into a system of *meaning relations*. The labelling, naming and 'texting' of objects in signifying practices are the means by which people come to know the world they live in and give structure to it. Such signifying practices and the discursive formations which result from them are necessary because they give us reference points from which we may navigate through life. The crucial point is this: 'What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive conditions of emergence' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 108). For the main points of this discussion see *Fig. 4*.

Laclau and Mouffe's view of discourse, while not reductive in an idealist sense, is however, like Foucault's, primarily conceived in terms of language rather than multimodally, as a multiplicity of meaning relations. On the other hand, their focus on language has the effect of giving linguistically realised texts a central role in the social construction of the world. They therefore reaffirm the importance of language in relation to other modes of meaning in a multiply signed reality. While all texts are multimodal, language remains a powerful medium in the construction of knowledge, as speech acts (statements), as linguistic discourse (language in use), as discourses (economic, political, environmental, etc.) and as genres (text types).



2.3.5 The Emancipation Problematic in Critical Discourse Analysis

To conclude this chapter I would like to summarise briefly CDA's discourse of emancipation, or 'emancipation problematic'. The discourse of emancipation is a common theme running through CDA literature (e.g. Hodge and Kress, 1979; Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew, 1979; Van Dijk, 1985, 1993, 1994; Fairclough, 1989, 1992a, 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). The following example is from Fowler and Kress.

... the resistance which critical linguistics offers to mystificatory tendencies in language is not resistance to language itself, nor to individual users of language, but to the social processes which make language work in communication as it does. It is a critique of the structures and goals of a society which has impregnated its language with social meanings many of which we regard as negative, dehumanising and restrictive in their effects. (Fowler and Kress, 1979a: 196)

An emancipation discourse is also apparent in CLA (see especially Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič and Martin-Jones, 1990, 1991; Janks and Ivanič, 1992; Wallace, 1999; Clark and Ivanič, 1999). For example: 'Consciousness raising, including CLA, is part of a process in which we learn how to emancipate ourselves and others. It is the first step in which we come to understand that underdogs need liberation' (Janks and Ivanič, *ibid*: 307). Fairclough for his part (1989: 239-40) argues that 'critical language awareness is a facilitator for 'emancipatory discourse' ... which challenges, breaks through, and may ultimately transform the dominant orders of discourse, as a part of the struggle of oppressed social groupings against the dominant bloc' (Fairclough, 1989: 239-40).

A significant development in this discourse is that some key thinkers in CDA seem to have changed their perspectives, most notably Kress and Fairclough. Kress has moved his theoretical perspective on language towards a multimodal theory of the sign, and towards education in an increasingly globalised, multicultural and multilingual society (e.g. Kress, 1996b, 2000a, 2000b, 2003). In the process he seems to have distanced himself from CL and CDA as he was associated with them. Also less clear today is his attitude to the Marxist problematic which informed much of his earlier work in CL. Kress's project today, in his own words, is forging 'an appropriate literacy curriculum within a much extended curriculum of communication and representation for the young people now in schools who will lead their lives ... in the next few decades' (Kress, 1996b). Fairclough, on the other hand, has not developed away from CDA but has considerably deepened his association with it. There

have been changes however, most notably his earlier attachment to more classical Marxist theoretical positions seems to be much less evident than it is in *Language and Power* (1989) and *Discourse and Social Change* (1992a), where the nature of class struggle, capitalist exploitation, and processes of ideological domination are principal concerns.

This is most evidenced in the publication with Lilie Chouliaraki of *Discourse in Late Modernity* (1999), which is presented as a major theoretical statement on CDA (also see Fairclough, 2003). Chouliaraki and Fairclough state that their rationale for writing *Discourse in Late Modernity* is that: 'the theories [CDA] rests upon and the methods it uses have not been explicitly and systematically spelt out as they might have been' (p. 1). This is true, only I do not believe that the social theories which are presented in this book are representative of the CDA which predated it. The Marxist problematic of the earlier work, informed largely by Marx, Althusser, Gramsci, and Habermas, is complemented in *Discourse in Late Modernity* by a variety of poststructuralist, postmodern and post-Marxist positions in the work of thinkers such as Harvey (1990), Jameson (1984a), Laclau and Mouffe (1985), and Giddens (1990, 1991, 1998). Chouliaraki and Fairclough distance themselves from 'Marxist providentialism' in favour of a more reflexive perception of capitalist late modernity. In place of the more classically Marxist problematic, thematic emphasis is now put on the need for 'dialogue across difference at local, national and international levels,' in politics as well as across different social and disciplinary boundaries (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 7). Significantly the theme of dialogue across difference has the effect of moving Chouliaraki and Fairclough's CDA in a more poststructuralist direction:

... we see ourselves as working within a post-structuralist perspective, but without adopting either post-structuralist reductions of the whole of social life to discourse, or post-structuralist judgemental relativism. (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 32)

It is primarily in this respect that I detect a departure on the part of Fairclough from his earlier positions on CDA (see also O'Regan, 2001, 2002). Fairclough seems to be weighting his later work much more substantially against the thesis of Marxist social transformation which I believe is implied in his earlier work. Just what Chouliaraki and Fairclough's poststructuralism seems to entail is discussed in Chapter Three (3.2.3) in the context of the relationship between poststructuralism and perceptions of knowledge, judgement and truth. In my view there are problems with the way in which they have articulated these conceptions.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to establish the principal interests of an exegetic approach which treats the text as a critical object. I have done this in relation to a set of themes which may be identified in various approaches to CDA. These have been discussed in turn. I have argued that CDA seems to support a problematic differentiation between ideology and truth in which ideology is presented as a hegemonic false consciousness. I have attempted to overcome this problem by relocating critical practice within a constructivist and multimodal theory of discourse which is derived from a combination of perspectives in the thought of Foucault (power/knowledge), Kress and Van Leeuwen (multimodality), and Laclau and Mouffe (discursive materialism). This has led to a redefined sense of discourse and text as they are understood in this study and has established the theoretical horizon against which the discussion in the remaining chapters of the thesis is developed. The central features of this theoretical backdrop are:

1. A re-orientation of critical practice away from a preoccupation with negative power and domination towards a more productive conception of power as positive and knowledge forming into which negative power has been incorporated. A critical practice premised on positive power becomes one of interpreting how we construct the world as we do, and involves (a) discursive mapping of social phenomena as they are realised in texts and (b) exploring in the light of this the potential for text problematisation and deconstruction.
2. A CDA which is not predicated upon a Marxist articulation of emancipation but takes a more open view of social critique and change as a struggle against the generalisation of unreflexive certainties and beliefs, against truths presented as organising principles, and against what Marcuse (1964: 99) refers to as 'the closing of the universe of discourse.'

In Chapter Four a theorisation of exegetic procedure and discussion in classroom-based CDA is presented in relation to complementary perspectives in the thought of Adorno, Derrida and Habermas. In order to prepare the ground for this discussion and for the perspectives and empirical data which are presented in the remaining chapters of the thesis, Chapter Three bridges the space between the wider theoretical backdrop of this chapter and the specific theorisation of procedure which is presented there.

Chapter Three

Methodological Perspectives in Critical Social Research

3.1 Chapter synopsis

This chapter links the preceding chapters which describe the broader conceptual perspective of the thesis with the more specific theoretical perspectives described in Chapter Four. It also offers an account of my approach to the empirical part of the thesis. I have explained in Chapter One that the thesis has two aspects, a theoretical aspect, and an empirical aspect, and that together they constitute the data for the research, although the principal focus of discussion is on the theoretical. In my view the overall methodological approach of this thesis is best described as a ‘multiperspectival’ one because I have endeavoured to select from a range of theoretical perspectives in addressing and developing the research questions of the thesis. This chapter begins by explaining how and why I decided to adopt a multiperspectival approach and how this meshes with the overall design. It then moves on to a discussion of relativism in the context of the poststructuralist perspective of the thesis and the implications this has for qualitative methods of enquiry. This is followed by a description of how I have approached the empirical data in Chapter Six. In this context my methodology for the empirical data is loosely oriented towards ethnographic research insofar as it adopts methods of ‘thick description’ and participant-observation in discussing the data. I discuss how I believe this kind of perspective intersects with the approach I have taken and conclude with a brief description of the tools which I adopted for the data collection.

3.2 The research ethos

3.2.1 The background to the research

When I started on this research project I had a different perception of how it would develop with respect to what it has become. This is perhaps not entirely unexpected because as different ideas and perspectives come into view it is not unusual that understandings and perceptions change, and with these changes so can the nature of the research change. Malinowski (1922: 8-9) has said something similar in relation to anthropological research: ‘if a man (sic) sets out on an expedition determined to prove certain hypotheses, if he is incapable of changing his view constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say his work will be worthless.’ I have not set out to prove

certain hypotheses, my approach has been much more of an exploratory one, and is still very much educational work in progress. That said, I have seen this project take shape in ways that I had not entirely envisaged, particularly in terms of the specific social theories which would be drawn on in my research and how these would be developed in relation to one another.

I noted in Chapter One that I felt there were problems at the level of social theory in CDA, and also at the level of educational practice. Specifically, I was uneasy about the Marxist emancipatory discourse of CDA and what seemed to be its reified positions on class, ideology and capitalist domination, and what this implied for an understanding of emancipation; I was also concerned with the problem of transferring to an educational context the practices and procedures of CDA's approach to reading texts. This seemed overly complex and accompanied by a metalinguistic framework which was difficult to apply. I wanted to find a way of developing a critical reading framework which students and other educational groups would find easier to adopt and put into practice than the ones already existing within CDA. This then also begged the question of how the theoretical and teaching aspects of the study might fit together.

From reading the available CDA literature I turned to critical social theory because it seemed to me that much of the responsibility for the theoretical problems which I was experiencing with CDA, as well as possible answers to these problems, lay in the nexus between the social theory categories of Marxism, Critical Theory, Poststructuralism and Postmodernism, including 'pre-Postmodern' counter-enlightenment thought (e.g. Nietzsche, Heidegger). I also saw this as an important step in relation to appreciating some of the current debates in critical social science, in addition to recent socio-theoretical developments in CDA (e.g. Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). It was during this time that I found my initial perspectives on the thesis changing; but as my perspectives changed, they also crystallised so that the path of my research, and the reasons why this path seemed a productive one to follow, became clearer to me.

One of the more significant impacts on my thinking at this time was the ongoing debate between modernist and postmodernist positions on society, knowledge, history, culture and language. A notable feature of this debate is the extent to which the ideas and perspectives of both traditions are often conceived as incommensurable discourses (e.g. Habermas, 1987a; Eagleton, 1991; Pennycook, 1994; Lyotard, 1994; Hammersley, 1996; Callinicos, 1999). In

my reading I certainly became aware of a great many differences, but of more interest to me was that I began to find answers to some of the questions I had been asking about CDA and, more importantly, that these answers were coming from certain coincidences or ‘complementarities’ which I perceived between the perspectives of a number of the critical social theorists whose work I had examined, principally Adorno, Derrida and Habermas. Moreover, these complementarities seemed to make the most sense when applied to educational contexts of use, and so it was from these that I ultimately settled on the idea of this thesis as a theorised account of critical exegetic procedure in an educational context.

In order to address the problems which I had found with the more dogmatic emancipatory positions in CDA, I also re-examined Foucault’s contribution to CDA, particularly through the work of Fairclough (e.g. 1989, 1992a) and Pennycook (2001), but also at source (Foucault, 1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1984, 1989, 1991) and realised that a poststructuralist re-estimation of criticality was possible within the discourse-analytical framework which CDA already offered. This seemed to open the possibility of an alternative *critical* understanding of doing *critical* discourse analysis. This alternative understanding of criticality has been described in Chapter Two. Moreover, many of the perspectives which critical discourse analysts have towards texts and the reasons they give for studying them seemed to come through this process more or less intact, i.e. they remained perspectives with which I could still agree, but with the qualification of there being incorporated within them a more open-ended understanding of critical practice and social change. For example:

CLA (Critical Language Awareness) aims to draw upon learners’ own language and discourse experience to help them to become more conscious of the practice they are involved in as producers and consumers of texts: of the social forces and interests that shape it; the power relations and ideologies that invest it; its effects upon social identities, social relations, knowledge, and beliefs; and the role of discourse in processes of cultural and social change. (Fairclough, 1992: 239-240)

There is a compelling need for a critical theorisation and analysis of late modernity that can not only illuminate the world that is emerging but also realise what unrealised alternative directions exist – how aspects of this new world which enhance human life can be accentuated, how aspects which are detrimental to it can be changed or mitigated. Thus the basic motivation of social science is to contribute to an awareness of what is, how it has come to be, and what it might become, on the basis of which people may be able to make and remake their lives ... And this is also the motivation for CDA. (Fairclough and Chouliaraki, 1999: 4)

I believe these aspirations continue to be relevant to the educational CDA of this thesis.

3.2.2 Multiperspectivism: Nietzsche

Concomitant with the development of a better theoretical understanding of what I wanted to do in this thesis was an appreciation of a multiperspectival approach to theory and method in the social sciences:

Since there exists no one, true certain, or absolutely valid perspective in which one could ground social theory today, a critical social theory must be open to new theoretical discourses and perspectives, eschewing dogmatism and closed theories. Multiperspectival theories could bring together perspectives such as critical theory, poststructuralism, postmodern theory, feminist theory, and other major theoretical discourses to produce a radical theory and politics for the present age. This would involve drawing on the specific perspectives advanced within critical theory from Adorno to Habermas, or feminist theory ranging from de Beauvoir to Kristeva. From the political standpoint, a multiperspectival critical theory would involve bringing people together with various standpoints, articulating their common interests, and respecting their differences. (Best and Keller, 1991: 266-267)

The principal influences for the development of a multiperspectival approach in this thesis have been, in the first instance, Best and Kellner (1991, 1997) and Monceri (2003). I have also found Norris (1992), Critchley (1999a, 1999b), and Borradori (2003) helpful for drawing out a number of the commonalities between Derrida and Habermas. Forming a backdrop to the perspectives of Best, Kellner and Monceri is the multiperspectivism of Nietzsche (1968a, 1968b, 1976).

In his writings Nietzsche engaged in a critique of reason, science, positivism and idealist philosophy which influenced many of the positions of the Frankfurt School as well as maincurrents within the postmodern tradition, including the poststructuralism of Foucault and Derrida. Less acknowledged, as I will endeavour to show, is Nietzsche's anticipation of more recent critical, constructivist, poststructuralist and postmodern developments related to 'the crisis of representation' in qualitative research methodology (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 16) (e.g. Haraway, 1988; Lather, 1988, 1991a, 1991b, 1993; Usher, Bryant and Johnston, 1997; Scheurich, 1997; Smith and Deemer, 2000; Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000; Lincoln and Denzin, 2000). The Ariadne's thread running through Nietzsche's critique of modernism is an antipathy towards the conception of a knowing subject interacting with a transparent and

knowable reality. To Nietzsche, the idea of the knowing subject is an illusion: 'There exists neither 'spirit' nor reason, nor thinking, nor consciousness, nor soul, nor will, nor truth: all are fictions that are of no use' (Nietzsche, 1968a: 266). In place of the knowing subject Nietzsche posits, like Marx, a subject historically and materially conditioned and situated, who is a product of multiple drives, impulses and experiences: 'My hypothesis, the subject as multiplicity' (ibid: 270).

On the question of a knowable reality Nietzsche rejects the idea that there is an objective reality outside of our interpretations of it. The world is only knowable through interpretation, and this is always multiple: 'In so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. – Perspectivism' (ibid: 267). The corollary of this is that for Nietzsche there are no facts, no foundational truths, only interpretations: "'Interpretation," the introduction of meaning – not "explanation" ... There are no facts, everything is in flux, incomprehensible, elusive; what is relatively most enduring is – our opinions' (ibid: 327).

One of the reasons why objective reality is elusive according to Nietzsche is because language casts a veil over it; it screens objective reality off and makes it inaccessible. He therefore rejects, and was probably the first critical social theorist to do so, the positivist conception of a transparent correspondence between language and observable reality which would render that reality knowable: 'The demand for an adequate mode of expression is senseless: it is of the essence of language, a means of expression, to express a mere relationship' (ibid: 334). Instead he thought that words were 'perhaps the horizon of our knowledge' (ibid: 267), rather than the means by which true knowledge, or absolute truths, could be realised.

Nietzsche's critique of positivism was also an attack on science: 'Of all the interpretations of the world attempted hitherto, the mechanistic one seems today to stand victorious in the foreground' (ibid: 332). He castigated science for assuming the calculability of the world and the measurement of true knowledge. For Nietzsche science epitomised the will to power: 'a kind of lust to rule [which] would like to compel all other drives to accept it as a norm' (ibid: 267). Science in his view, and anticipating Foucault, merely projects invented categories onto the observed world, dividing the world up and classifying it, and then presenting these classifications as truths. Moreover, he saw this classification process in terms of imposing a

crude stasis on a world that is always dynamic, in flux, developing and ‘becoming’. ‘If the world could in any way become rigid, dry, dead or *nothing*, or if it could reach a state of equilibrium ... then this state must have been reached. But it has not been reached: from which it follows – ... the mechanistic theory stands refuted’ (ibid: 548-9; emphasis in original).

The crude stability which modernity imposes upon the world engenders in his view a ‘nihilistic’ disposition towards it, understood as a sense of apathy, sameness, and ennui in the face of a known and static reality. For Nietzsche this faith in a known world was fictive and indicative of a ‘herd instinct’, i.e. a levelling desire to be the same; not in the sense of class, or status, or abstract notions of equality, but as a levelling of *perspective* in relation to nomothetic truths, such as the truth of science, the truth of the market, the truth of reason, or the truth of Christianity. Faith in such universals has had the consequence that ‘we have measured the value of the world according to categories *that refer to a purely fictitious world*’ (ibid: 13; original emphasis), a world of static ‘being’ rather than one of dynamic, active and fluid ‘becoming’: ‘To impose upon becoming the character of being – that is the supreme will to power’ (ibid: 330). In other words, the will to power is a will to the closure of interpretation. Thus, rather than putting our faith in static truths and representations that have been telescoped through science, or religion, or the economy, Nietzsche argues that ‘we should learn how to employ a *variety* of affective perspectives and interpretations in the service of knowledge’ (Nietzsche: 1968b: 555; emphasis in the original).

This kind of ‘perspectival seeing’ according to Best and Kellner (1997) is indicative of the extent to which we are historically, culturally, and also physically located beings. To this I would also add ‘discursively located’ because each of these characteristics is discursively realised. Owing to the restrictions placed upon us by our existence, it behoves us to observe the world through multiple lenses because ‘reality is too complex and many sided to be grasped from a single perspective’ (ibid: 66). We should therefore observe the world from a number of different angles; each angle, vista or vantage point will offer a different point of view, and together will present a multiperspectival vision, one which is more rounded and less partial than that produced from just a single perspective.

Although Nietzsche rejected the discourse of science he did not reject experimentalism because he saw this as a means of putting a multiperspectival approach to work. He preferred

working hypotheses to unified theories (Monceri, 2003), but attacked the belief in positivist objectivity as myopic because he did not believe that there were value-neutral standpoints from which an objective reality could be described or elucidated. As Best and Kellner explain:

Nietzsche's multiperspectival approach undermines claims for an absolute truth or for a single infallible method that will guarantee truth and objectivity. Nietzsche was in favour of ... gaining knowledge through the senses, and of testing hypotheses and attaining cumulative knowledge, but he attacked the belief in objectivity, in an immaculate perception, in a completely nonbiased and noninterested mode of seeing. Perception and cognition were always perspectival ... and he scorned those who believed that science alone could attain truth or that the scientist has privileged access to reality. (Best and Kellner, 1997: 67)

In addition to having a considerable impact on the thought of Adorno, whose constellations perspective is derived from it (see Chapter Four), Nietzsche's multiperspectivism, and Best and Kellner's (1991, 1997) and Monceri's (2003) explanations of it, were responsible for encouraging my interest in developing a theorisation of procedure in critical reading and discussion which was derived from the perspectives of critical thinkers coming from competing and often 'conflicting' philosophical traditions, in particular Derrida and Habermas. Adorno is located between the two as a kind of bridge, both as a Frankfurt School critical theorist, like Habermas, and as a thinker who, like Nietzsche, in many ways anticipates the postmodern and poststructuralist turn in western philosophy (cf. Ryan, 1982). The methodology for the research of the theoretical data in this thesis is therefore based upon a multiperspectival methodology, which Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 6), in another context, describe as a 'dialogue across difference' on issues of social and political concern in late modernity, as well as issues of epistemological concern in the critical social sciences. The multiperspectivism of Nietzsche and the influence he has had on the development of a postmodern sensibility within the critical social sciences raise a number of questions regarding the status of truth in qualitative research, in particular with respect to the extent to which a rejection of epistemic truth constitutes an acceptance of judgemental, or 'anything goes', relativism. This issue is addressed in the next section.

3.2.3 On relativism

Nietzsche's anti-essentialism and anti-positivism have found many echoes in current methodological debates in qualitative educational research. Lincoln and Denzin (2000: 1049) for example characterise the qualitative researcher as someone who 'is not an objective, authoritative, politically neutral observer standing outside and above the [research] text, [but] historically positioned and locally situated.' The feminist poststructuralist Patti Lather notes that 'ways of knowing are inherently culture bound and perspectival' (quoted in Scheurich, 1997: 33), and Smith and Deemer (2000: 879-80) declare that 'There is no possibility of theory-free observation and knowledge, ... no special epistemic privilege can be attached to any particular method or set of methods ... we can no longer talk in terms of a foundational epistemology and a direct ontological realism.' In these circumstances all we can have are 'the various points of view of actual persons reflecting various interests and purposes that their descriptions and theories subserve' (Putnam quoted in Smith and Deemer, 2000: 880).

That we are governed by and located within historical and social circumstances from which there is no exit is a view that is also shared with the Frankfurt School. Habermas, for example, has described the position of the critical researcher in the following terms:

... the interpreter cannot abstractly free himself from his hermeneutic point of departure. He cannot simply jump over the open horizon of his own life activity and just suspend that context of tradition in which his own subjectivity has been formed in order to submerge himself in a subhistorical stream of life that allows the pleasurable identification of everyone with everyone else. (Habermas, 1971: 181)

In other words we are always socially and historically conditioned and constrained, a 'God's eye view', as Smith and Deemer (2000: 877) put it, is not realisable. In a Foucauldian perspective this means that we are not able to stand outside historical relations of discourse, knowledge and power. There is no value-neutral space, or Archimedean point, outside of these relations to which we may refer.

The problem with this line of thinking for the defenders of modernism, as well as for what Denzin and Lincoln (2000) term positivist and postpositivist qualitative researchers, i.e. researchers who wish to hold on to the idea that an objective reality of some sort may be described, is that it leads to 'relativism', in which relativism is understood nihilistically as an 'anything goes' perspective. According to this perception all judgements are equally valid

and all outcomes are equally good, there is no way to decide between the better and the worse. The consequence of relativism for some critics of the postmodern is that moral, political, ethical, judicial, and epistemological judgements of any kind are rendered empty and meaningless, with possibly dangerous consequences for research: '[It] allows irrational political commitments of any kind to govern research ... [because] all such commitments are necessarily and equally irrational' (Hammersley, 1996: 12).

Relativism understood in these terms also seems to place considerable limits on the value of research. What can we know if all knowledge is relative, and how do we lay down criteria of validity and generalisability in qualitative research? The problem with the modernist and foundationalist (positivist/postpositivist) argument against relativism is that relativism is invariably understood as the diametric 'Other' of universalism. As Pennycook (2001: 135) has observed, whenever 'challenges are made to objectivist or universalist frameworks of knowledge, the counterargument simply involves accusations of relativism or nihilism.' Lather has also caricatured the foundationalist argument as tantamount to saying that 'if we can't know everything, we can know nothing' (Lather quoted in Pennycook, *ibid*: 135). In other words, if we cannot know what truth is, then we cannot know what anything is.

Lather and Pennycook's criticisms of foundationalism also represent a neat inversion of more extreme 'ludic' postmodern positions on modernity, of the kind sometimes espoused by thinkers like Baudrillard (1993, 1994) and Lyotard (1984), where universalism is equated with totality and pronounced 'terroristic', and where 'we can know nothing' is nihilistically embraced in a spirit of profound passivity and inertia: 'there are no more definitions possible ... It has all been done. All that remains ... is to play with the pieces. Playing with the pieces – that is postmodern' (Baudrillard quoted in Best and Kellner, 1991: 128).

The problem with both perspectives is that foundationalism and relativism are always presented as the reverse sides of a binary totality. It is either totalising metanarrative or it is totalising contingency, with nothing in between. In my view it is important to avoid the epistemological and judgemental 'all or nothing' one-dimensionality which issues from both kinds of totalism. For this reason I prefer to think of universalism and relativism not in binary terms, as absolute 'Others', but as situated within a 'fluid', three-dimensional space. Rather than focusing on the 'North-South' or 'East-West' extremities of this space, which is where I think the binary anti-relativist and anti-foundationalist arguments are largely located, I find it

more productive, and more reflective of the nature of our lived existence, to imagine the space in between, nearer the centre, where they ‘blur’ into one another, as when different ocean currents meet and intermingle, creating vortexes of current and temperature, each moving above, below, through and round one another. In this more fluid space decisions, values, and judgements continue to matter because we have to be able to navigate through life, to make choices which we find personally important to us ‘in the swim’ so to speak, which develop and sustain notions of justice, fairness, and compassion, which keep the social open, and which allow us to challenge the kinds of nomothetic closures of discourse (as ‘market’, as ‘science’, as ‘monopolitics’, as ‘religion’, as ‘Terror War’, as ‘truth’, etc.) which Nietzsche objected to. It is also simultaneously a space in which we recognise our human finitude, our historical, social and discursive ‘situatedness’, and therefore also our limits of knowing. This includes not only our limits to knowledge, but also our limits to truth. Therefore, as Schwandt puts it:

We must learn to live with uncertainty, with the absence of final vindications, without the hope of solutions in the form of epistemological guarantees. Contingency, fallibilism, dialogue, and deliberation mark our way of being in the world. *But these ontological conditions are not the equivalent to eternal ambiguity, the lack of commitment, the inability to act in the face of uncertainty.* (Schwandt quoted in Smith and Deemer, 2000: 884; my emphasis)

An acceptance of our finitude and the admittance into our thinking of a relativist sensibility in relation to truth is not therefore to adopt a passive Baudrillardian nihilism towards our being in the world. If absolute truths are to be given up, it does not mean that we must stop talking about ways in which change might occur, and actively working towards social change as a goal, but we must do so always with one eye on our fallibility, on our limits to knowing, on an acceptance of our historical and discursive situatedness. Above all we must be wary of the implications of truth, and systemically unified conceptions of truth, as an organising principle.

Thus when Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 8) from the perspective of CDA say that ‘although epistemic relativism must be accepted – that all discourses are socially constructed relative to the social positions that people are in – this does not entail judgemental relativism – that all discourses are equally good’ there are two ways of interpreting this. On the one hand, it can be argued that they succumb to the binarist interpretation of relativism, because

they are equating judgemental relativism with a one-dimensional ‘all or nothing’ view of truth. They also in this vein seem to reinforce the binarism of their position by suggesting that epistemic truth is constructed *within* discourse while simultaneously suggesting that judgemental truth is not. I do not think it is possible to hold both positions at once, because truth cannot be both inside and outside discourse, particularly if they see themselves ‘as working *within* a poststructuralist perspective’ (ibid: 32; my emphasis). Moreover, to say that they accept epistemic relativism is also, in itself, judgementally relative. On the other hand, a more sympathetic interpretation can be made in which judgemental relativism is understood (*within* discourse) in the more fluid, blurred, and multifaceted manner I have described above, rather than as a foundational non-discursive and ahistorical understanding of the good and the true. Here, as I have said, judgements, moral, ethical, social, political and judicial do matter, and remain important. Moreover, they make possible a continued commitment to an active and radical democratic politics. As Laclau puts it:

Abandonment of the myth foundations does not lead to nihilism, just as uncertainty as to how an enemy will attack does not lead to passivity. It leads rather to a *proliferation of discursive interventions and arguments that are necessary*, because there is no extradiscursive reality that discourse might simply reflect. Inasmuch as argument and discourse constitute the social, their open-ended character becomes the source of a greater activism and a more radical libertarianism. (Laclau quoted in Best and Kellner, 1997: 273; my emphasis)

Thus, relativism when presented in the form of one part of a binary totality is always an irredeemably passive nihilism, but this kind of argument is made only by denying our historical, social and discursive situatedness; that is, by claiming a position outside history and outside discourse. In these circumstances, what is untenable is not just this perception of relativism, but the idea that the very nature of our being may be transcended in order that we may speak from nowhere.

In the case of ludic postmodernists like Baudrillard, what they deny is that there is any history left. They place themselves like Hegel at the end of history and therefore simultaneously tip themselves outside it. Baudrillard’s passive nihilism therefore also becomes an ahistorical badge of truth. As Hall has noted: ‘What raises my political hackles is the comfortable way in which French intellectuals now take it upon themselves to declare when and for whom history ends ... I think that Baudrillard needs to join the masses for a

while, to be silent for two thirds of a century, just to see what it feels like' (quoted in Best and Kellner, 1991: 294).

3.2.4 Implications for qualitative research

The advent of poststructuralist and postmodern thought has impacted on understandings of qualitative research in various ways. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 16) refer to a 'crisis of representation' where qualitative research texts are no longer capable of capturing the real. There are no 'pristine interpretations' because 'even the so-called objective writings of qualitative research are interpretations, not value-free descriptions' (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000: 286). In the absence of foundational criteria for validity, Schwandt (2000: 202) suggests that 'whether an interpretation [of a research text] invites, persuades, compels, entertains, evokes or delights' may be the only criteria left 'for judging whether one interpretation is better than another.' For Smith and Deemer (2000: 886) it is no longer possible to talk about 'findings' because to do so is 'to employ the language of a discovered world' which 'is outside the domain of human will' (Hazelrigg quoted in Smith and Deemer, *ibid*: 886). Scheurich (1997: 38) has responded to these issues by arguing for a Derridean deconstructive position towards the research text, which he has derived from Norris:

to criticise ... from *within* an inherited language, a discourse that will always have been worked over in advance by traditional concepts and categories. What is required is a kind of internal distancing, an effort of defamiliarisation which prevents concepts from settling down into routine habits of thought. (Norris, 1987: 54; emphasis in original)

What Scheurich is arguing for is a type of self-reflexive critical discourse analysis of research texts, a self-problematizing practice of research writing. He also suggests that it is important, in the context of our limits to knowing, to 'signal an awareness of this as a researcher' (Scheurich, 1997: 38). Haraway (1988), for her part, acknowledges the limits to knowing by arguing for 'situated, local knowledges' in research.

I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning and situating, where partiality and universality is the condition of being heard to make rational truth claims. These are claims on people's lives. I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity. (Haraway, 1988: 589)

This echoes Nietzsche's belief in the value of 'little, unpretentious truths' over universalising ones (quoted in Best and Kellner, 1997: 62), and Geertz's contention that knowledge is 'always ineluctably local' (quoted in Holstein and Gubrium, 1998: 149).

Although I too reject universalising (*outside* discourse) claims to truth and knowledge, I also believe that there is a dialectical and hermeneutic relationship between the particular and the general (*within* discourse) which remains to be explored. The relationship is dialectical because our interpretations and understandings of the local are always carried out in relation to a broader 'lifeworld' understanding of our lived human experience (see Chapter Four: 4.4.3), and for this reason knowledge is not *just* ineluctably local or situated, but is bound up with our knowledge and conceptions of the wider world, however partial these may be. I also believe that local knowledge, 'the particular', is an important fulcrum for generating questions about 'the general' and how it is constituted in order that we are able to raise questions in turn about the particular and how it too is constituted, and I think Haraway, Denzin, Lincoln, Lather and many of the other researchers I have mentioned would agree with this. As Smith and Deemer (*ibid*: 886) put it: '... the point is to examine and fully discuss why we construct the world as we do' and this is a question which is as much general as it is particular.

This relationship, between the particular and the general, is also a hermeneutic one because the questioning processes which accompany a dialectical method are accomplished within a hermeneutic circle of enquiry. That is, in order to understand the part, we must also look to the whole, and vice-versa. Geertz describes this process as:

a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of the local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring both into view simultaneously ... Hopping back and forth between the whole conceived through the parts and the parts conceived through the whole which motivates them, we seek to turn them, by a sort of intellectual perpetual motion, into explications of one another. (Geertz quoted in Schwandt, 2000: 193)

Moreover, as Kincheloe and McLaren (2000: 286) note: 'No final interpretation is sought in this context, as the activity of the circle proceeds with no need for closure.' The local text may therefore be a guide to the global text but always on the understanding that our view of the global text will always be from within.

3.3 The nature of the empirical enquiry

3.3.1 The context: 'Critical Discourse and the Media'

In this section I offer an account of how I approached the empirical aspect of the research. This was qualitative and interpretative, and did not include statistical analysis. My interest was to examine how the TACO framework and procedure worked in practice, that is, in relation to the second research question of this thesis, which asks what the TACO procedure looks like and how it can be used. Chapters Four and Five contribute to explaining the first part of this question, what TACO looks like. Chapter Six addresses the second part of this question, how it can be used. In order to do this, the data and the material introduced in Chapter Six are derived from an undergraduate module I taught at Oxford Brookes University called 'Critical Discourse and the Media'. I think it would be useful first to explain briefly the context in which the empirical data is situated before I go on to discuss how I approached the research.

This module ran for the first time in Term 2 of the academic year 2003-04 and its content was based to a large extent on the arguments and perspectives of this thesis. This was largely coincidental as the class was not constituted for the purposes of this study. A related issue is that the empirical data which has been derived from this class is 'naturally occurring', that is, it is not data which is the product of a formal research design. The empirical data is therefore in this sense 'exploratory' rather than 'theory-forming'. Its main purpose is to illuminate in a classroom context some aspects of the theorisation of procedure which are presented in this study, principally in Chapter Four (see also 6.2.1).

Critical Discourse and the Media is an 'advanced module' which means that it may be taken in either the second or third year of a student's undergraduate studies. The module is formally located within the English Language and Linguistics Field, but because of the modular nature of the University's curriculum is also open to a range of students from other undergraduate programmes if they wish to take it. It is also an introductory module in that it assumes no knowledge of Critical Discourse Analysis. For the first run of the module thirteen students opted to take it. Of these three were international exchange students from Italy doing courses related to language, media, and communication, five were from English Language and Linguistics and/or Communication Media and Culture Fields, and four were English Literature students. The Linguistics/Communication students included one student

from Thailand and one from Japan. There were therefore five non-native speakers in the class. All the rest spoke English as their first language. In addition, all the students, apart from the Italians, who were third and fourth year students, were in the second year of their studies, and all of them except for one were female. The students were mostly between 19 and 22 years of age. The male student was in his late 20s.

The module ran for 10 weeks in the spring term of the academic year 2003-04. Of the 10 weeks available there were 8 weeks of actual class contact as it is the norm for there to be a reading week in the middle of the term, and for there not to be any classes in week 10 because this is the timetabled university examination week. *Critical Discourse and the Media* was not examined but assessed entirely on coursework (a 2000 word assignment and a group poster presentation), and so the students' involvement in the module effectively ended in week 9 with the poster presentations. Class contact was for 3 hours a week with a short break in the middle.

Chapter Six is centred on the transcript of a recorded classroom discussion of a text which took place in week 5 of the course. This transcript is the focus of the empirical data. The discussion of the transcript is preceded by my own TACO reading of the text on which the transcript is based. This has been done so that my reading can be used as a point of comparison and reference in relation to the classroom discussion.

A detailed description of this module and its content from week to week, as well as a number of the materials used, have been included in an appendix (Appendix B). Also included in this appendix are comments on two additional pieces of data: (i) the students' own perceptions of the TACO approach which they were asked to include in a summary as part of the poster presentation assessment (see coursework in Appendix C); and (ii) their views of the module as a whole based on the end of course evaluations which they had completed.

3.3.2 The orientation to the classroom

At the start of this chapter, and in the previous section, I have emphasised that this is an exploratory research project. Apart from the theoretical questions which I want to explore, and the objectives I have for a critical reading framework for the classroom, I have also been motivated by how I see my role as a teacher. That is, I see myself as a teacher in a teaching context first, and as a researcher in a researching context second, and this has implications for

how I view the role of theory, particularly social theory, in relation to what I do. In this kind of context I see my role as trying to make some sense of the abstractness of social theory and to try to apply what I understand about these things to practical contexts, so that for example Adornian immanent critique, Derridean deconstruction and Habermasian communicative action are not just theoretical concepts to be argued over by social theorists and academics and ignored by everyone else, but that they are concepts which can be put to work as part of an educational praxis, and made *practically* available to students.

I therefore have a vision of the university classroom as a place of communication, learning and understanding, and of the role of the teacher in that context. I believe that the purpose of the teacher is to facilitate communicative action in the classroom, to create spaces for discursivity and the mutual exchange of perspectives and opinions. The development of the TACO framework is my attempt to mediate between social theory and educational praxis in a way which I hope may make some sense to the students I am fortunate to have in my classes. TACO therefore puts social theory to work, but not simply as an approach to reading texts, but as an approach to reading texts with students in a classroom, and this has been an important motivation for the research which this thesis describes.

3.3.3 The orientation to the empirical research

The question then remains as to how to characterise my methodological approach. I have referred to this as being loosely ethnographic insofar as it is a descriptive and interpretative account given from the perspective of a participant-observer in the classroom. My perspective in this context is also a constructivist and poststructuralist one. That is, I cannot claim that my text renders ‘truth’, although it does try to render ‘reason’ in being an iterative representation of my experience with this class of students, and one which I have made in good faith. As Derrida has said in relation to the university: ‘Whenever reason can be rendered, it must ... We have a responsibility to respond to the call of the principle of reason’ (Derrida, 1998: 350). To that extent my research text, and here I am thinking primarily of the discussion of the recorded data, has a ‘preferred reading’. I want my text to say that the events which it describes happened at a certain time in a certain place, and to give a representation of what occurred and my reactions to that. I also want the text to show what seemed to be successful and what was not so successful about adopting a TACO approach with this class. In order to convey this I have aimed for a type of *verisimilitude* in my account (Denzin, 1997; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). That is, I have sought to present my

research text so that it is accessible to the community of readers who are likely to read it (cf. Usher et al, 1997); for example other academics, critical discourse analysts, teachers and qualitative researchers like myself, and I have done this in such a way that the text may be read as a 'reasonable' one, if not one that is necessarily 'true'. As Carter has said in this context: 'At ... best [we] can do no more than persuade a group or community or readers that the interpretation proffered is a reasonable one for that community and that within its limits it can be validated by others by reference to the language used' (Carter, 1997: 122). In other words, the reasonableness of the text will depend on the extent to which it accords with the shared genre expectations and maxims of social research comprehensibility of, in this case, an academic discourse community which is aware of the problems and issues for qualitative research which I have raised here, and is prepared to entertain the preferred reading which my text wishes to convey.

I have therefore tried in this thesis to follow, within these constraints, a plan of argument which is logical, organised, and internally consistent. On the question of the methodology for the empirical research however, I believe that my approach probably has more in common with 'messy texts' (Denzin, 1997; Lincoln and Guba, 2000), understood as experimental, uncertain, reflexive, explorative, developmental, and textual, than with more planned ethnographic studies (e.g. Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Cohen et al, 2000): '[Messy texts] are aware of their own narrative apparatuses, ... are sensitive to how reality is socially constructed, ... and understand that writing is a way of "framing" reality' (Denzin, 1997: 224). The 'plannedness' of the thesis as a whole is in contrast to the more loosely structured organisation of the empirical material. I did not for example set out to select a method, plan a strategy based on that method, conduct interviews according to that method, or take systematic 'field notes' as I proceeded. I did on the other hand decide that the classroom research, i.e. the recording, would be overt rather than covert, and I shared with the class my interest in developing a theorised procedure for critical reading, and a concern for what they thought about this. I have also, in accordance with conventional research methods, changed the names of all of the students who participated in the class in order to protect their anonymity, although were any of them to read the text it is likely that they would recognise themselves and possibly other members of the class as well.

Insofar as an ethnographic orientation to the research was concerned, the discussion of the empirical data also exhibits some of the following features of ethnography:

- a tendency to work with primarily unstructured data, that is data, that has not been coded at the point of collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories.
- investigation of a small number of cases, perhaps just one case, in detail.
- analysis of the data ... which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations ... (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998: 110)

It is also a representation of a 'real' situation in that the data which is presented is an attempt to record what one of my classes was like. A further link to ethnographic practice is that I operated as a 'participant-observer' to the extent that I took part in the discussions in class. This however is with the recognition that, as the teacher of the class, I had more power over what occurred than did the other participants. That said, as I *am* a teacher I see it as part of my role in 'realising' the classroom to provide a 'scaffold' for discussion and learning to take place (cf. 4.4.3). I believe this is apparent from the recorded data.

Other ways in which my empirical research intersects with ethnographic interests is that I am offering a 'thick description' of an aspect of lived experience (Geertz, 1973), in this case an educational lived experience (cf. Barro et al, 1998; Roberts et al, 2000). As Jordan (2001: 42) has noted: 'What the ethnographer will present in her text is not the unmediated world of the other, but the world 'between' herself and the other.' Thick description is thus a participative and collaborative endeavour which has been realised dialogically before it can be rendered as a text.

Of course there are numerous instances of ways in which my study of the empirical data does not intersect with classic ethnographic interests. Some of these, in relation to method, strategy and fieldwork, have already been mentioned. I was also not an unobtrusive observer, and the study did not occur in the context of researching a cultural system, my own or another's, and how that system and its everyday cultural practices seemed to make sense to its members. Moreover, the main focus of the empirical data is a discussion which lasts for approximately an hour and thirty minutes rather than a documented account encompassing an extended period of time, perhaps several weeks, months or even years. In terms of selection I have drawn on episodic and case study principles (cf. Cohen et al, 2000) in choosing two main stretches of discussion from the same class which 'stand together', in order to be able to focus more clearly on how the students in the class seemed to have interacted with the TACO framework in relation to the text under discussion. Also relevant to the question of selection

is that I am including evaluative data about the approach in the form of reflective poster commentaries and module evaluations in an appendix (Appendix B). These are narratives of a kind but are perhaps unlike the cultural and personal narratives which are more often associated with classic ethnographic studies. In relation to the discussion of the data I have mentioned that I have made an effort to create a sense of *verisimilitude* for the reader. It remains to be seen whether I have succeeded in this, but this is also less common in standard ethnographic projects, although there are now many differing examples of ethnographic writing genres in circulation, such as ‘stream of consciousness’ (Krieger, 1983), ‘performance’ - poems, scripts, short stories, and dramas - (Denzin, 1997), and ‘confessional texts’ (Jordan, 2001).

Related to this last point of confession, if I had known where I was going to arrive when I started this project, I would probably have done this differently and rethought how I would do the empirical research. My concerns and ideas regarding CDA were however not in the form of a hypothesis to be tested, although when the time came I did have a question, the latter part of my second research question, to which I was seeking some kind of answer, as well as a defined perception of a communicative classroom which I wished to enact.

Another possible problem is that I did not have another classroom observer, or co-researcher, to compare my observations with, although I do not know how possible that would have been to arrange. Nevertheless, it would have been useful to have a ‘second text’ to juxtapose to my own. On the other hand, this would certainly have changed the quality of the classroom event, whether the other observer had participated or simply silently observed, and I would have then been analysing yet another kind of text from the one which has been included in these pages. I have, however, been fortunate to have received comments on the transcript which have indicated to me features of the classroom interactions which I had not considered, relating to the ‘non-standard’ nature of the teacher-student exchanges; i.e. that the exchange structure is by and large not ‘Initiation, Response, Follow-up’ (cf. Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975).³

As some compensation for the lack of another observer, I have offered my own interpretation of the text that was discussed in week 5 both to contextualise the classroom transcript and in

³ I am grateful to Catherine Wallace for this observation.

order to provide another interpretation of the same text, although with the recognition that the transcript is also my production (and interpretation) of what I heard on the tape. Being very closely involved in the selection and production of the empirical research data also entails as a researcher that I am responsible for what I have made. This is in many ways a good thing because it means that I am not a ‘discoverer/finder’ but a ‘constructor/maker’ (Smith and Deemer, 2000). But part of the responsibility of being a constructor/maker is that my text attempts to respect those events which detract from what I was hoping to experience. In other words, I should try to resist the temptation to edit out from the text those elements of my experience which do not show me in a favourable light. A second observer might have helped me to do this, although I believe that I have been as faithful as I can be to ‘making’ my experience verisimilar.

3.3.4 The empirical data

In total the empirical data consisted of:

- The classroom handouts which were given to the students on the module.
- A tape recording of the classroom discussion of a text. I recorded two class discussions and decided on the class in week 5 as the one I would use for illustrating the classroom practice. I alone was responsible for the recording; there was not a technician in the room. The full transcript of the discussion is included in an appendix to the thesis (Appendix A). The rationale for choosing this class to record was that in the preceding weeks students had been familiarised, little by little, with the different aspects of the TACO framework. The class in week 5 represented the first proper classroom session where the students had been asked prior to the class to read a text using the framework on their own.

The following data are commented on in an appendix (Appendix B):

- The students’ summaries of their personal contribution to the production of the poster for their group in which they were asked to say how useful they had found the TACO framework for reading texts.
- Feedback from the evaluations which the students completed in week 9. In the evaluation students were asked to give anonymous feedback regarding what they thought of the module as a learning experience.

Copies of the assessment instructions, two sample essays, and the poster commentaries are included in an appendix (Appendix C).

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have reflected upon how I have come to write this thesis by describing the perspectives which have influenced me and the rationales for the choices which I have made. My approach to the theoretical aspects of the thesis has been influenced by a multiperspectival perception of theory and method in the critical social sciences and by a poststructuralist sensibility in the pursuit of knowledge about the world. The consequence of this is a more textual understanding of the social as realised historically *within* discourse, and of ourselves as finite beings. The historical, cultural and discursive situatedness of lived experience acts as a constraint on the idea of relativism construed as ‘anything goes’ because it is not possible to conceive of this type of relativism other than ahistorically, i.e. from a position outside history and outside discourse. In this context I have also presented a view of relativism as the binary obverse of foundationalism in which both are totalising, either as contingency or as truth, and both are equally untenable. In contrast to these positions I envisage a more fluid ‘three-dimensional’ understanding of the relationship between relativist and universalist perceptions of truth in which notions of justice, compassion, politics and ethics remain important in the decision making processes of our lives but within a field of understanding which recognises our human finitude and the limits to our knowing. Research in the social sciences in these circumstances must, in my view, continue to be a dialectical and hermeneutic practice which makes links, *within* discourse, between the particular and the general, and the general and the particular, through a process of ‘discursive mapping’ (2.2.2) which contributes to an awareness of how we have come to construct the world as we do, and so that we may actively seek points where social change may occur within an open and radical democratic politics. In the textual history of the world one reading which stands out is that discourses of truth and certainty are today ever more inscribed upon the world as nomothetic faiths in ‘freedom’, ‘marketisation’, ‘science’, ‘technology’, ‘cybertechnology’, ‘militarism’, ‘God’, ‘good’, and ‘evil’, which due to the revolution in global communications seem even more nihilistic and pantextual than when Nietzsche first wrote about them. In these circumstances the undoing, decentring and destabilising of systems of meaning construction are welcome and necessary openings within a world increasingly realised in terms of closure.

One of my concerns as a teacher is that the students I teach come into contact with these destabilisations, decentrings and uncertainties during their time at university, so that they

have the opportunity of viewing the textual world from positions and angles which they may not have considered before. More significantly I wish through this research to put social theory to work as part of a communicative educational praxis which is predicated on how I view my role as a teacher in relation to questions of social theory and an abstracted discourse which often fails to make connections to educational practice, or which is debated territorially and in the absence of any meaningful dialogue. This has provided a further motivation for the approach to reading which this thesis describes.

The decentring of meaning which poststructuralism documents and the concomitant destabilisation of objective truth claims has had a major impact upon understandings of qualitative research methods and practices. I have concluded that in the absence of an objective truth which can be described I should endeavour to produce a verisimilar research text which seems reasonable to the members of the academic discourse community whom I imagine might read this research. Naturally, my ideal reader would be someone who sympathises with the positions which I have taken in this thesis, but I think it important too that my text seem reasonable to others who may be less sympathetic to these perspectives. That is, that they are able to read the transcribed empirical material and reach the decision that I have attempted to present my data in good faith, in a manner that is as clear as it reasonably can be. My text, as Derrida (1995: 427) has said, must be able to ‘render reason’ even if it cannot render reality (see also Derrida, 1998: 349).

The remaining chapters of the thesis are guided by the framework of my research questions. Chapter Four is therefore an account of how critical exegetic procedure and discussion in an educationally oriented Critical Discourse Analysis can be theorised through combining complementary aspects of critical and poststructuralist theory. Here the principal optics for this approach are the critical social theories of Adorno, Derrida and Habermas. Chapter Two began this process via the reconceptualisation of the meaning of criticality in a *critical* discourse analysis for educational purposes which is largely derived from Foucauldian poststructuralism. I have described Chapter Three as a bridge from this broader theoretical conception of critical practice to the more specifically procedural and textual critical perspectives in Chapter Four.

If Chapter Three has been a methodological bridge to the critical and poststructuralist theories of Chapter Four, Chapter Five is the apparatical bridge to the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter Five begins the process of explaining what the TACO framework looks like so that in Chapter Six an account can be given of how the framework might be used. Chapter Five therefore moves the theoretical discussion of exegetic procedure in Chapter Four in the direction of practice. The development of the TACO framework in Chapter Five is realised against the background of a comparative account of the reading frameworks and ‘apparatuses’ which already exist in CDA. This is necessary in order to show how the conception of the TACO framework and the discourse models and assumptions which lie behind it are different from those in CDA. Chapter Five therefore details how we move from the reading frameworks in CDA to a framework for treating the text as a critical object. Chapter Six then tries to demonstrate how such a perspective was put to work with a reflective account of a university course which was designed around this approach. Chapter Seven draws the main themes of the thesis together and reflects critically on the extent to which the empirical data manages to explicate the theoretical model, in order to determine what lessons might be learned for future applications of the TACO framework and for further studies in this area.

Chapter Four

From Theory to Procedure in Critical Reading

4.1 Chapter synopsis

This chapter addresses the research questions presented in Chapter One, that is, how critical and poststructuralist theories may be employed to inform a procedure of critical reading and discussion in a university classroom. This chapter adds to the conceptual arguments of Chapters One to Three in order to provide a procedural rationale for classroom-based critical exegesis and discussion. This rationale has two complementary dimensions: a procedural theorisation of critical reading, and a theorisation of the process of discussion around the text. This chapter introduces Adorno's method of immanent critique and Derrida's method of deconstruction as theoretical bases for a procedure of critical reading. It also presents Habermas's theory of the public sphere, and the principles of his theory of communicative action, as the bases of a proceduralist theorisation of classroom discussion around the text, and demonstrates how this perspective may be said to complement elements of thought in the work of Adorno, Derrida and Foucault.

4.2 Critical Social Theory and CDA

4.2.1 CDA and the text: the lack of a theorised procedure

I have argued that CDA does not offer a critically theorised procedure for the analysis of texts; instead it has relied upon the systemic meaning categories of SFL. This means that procedure in CDA is principally operationalised in terms of the ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning functions of texts (e.g. Halliday, 1978, 1994; Fowler and Kress, 1979a; Fairclough 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Clark et al, 1990, 1991; Ivanič, 1990; Chouliaraki 1998; Wallace, 1992, 1995, 2003). These were summarised in Chapter One (1.2). Fairclough has incorporated this perspective into his 'three-dimensional view of discourse': as text, as discourse practice, and as sociocultural practice (see Chapter Five: 5.2.1). Wallace on the other hand has opted for a more straightforwardly linguistic approach centred upon an SFL model of 'field', 'tenor' and 'mode' (see Chapter Five: 5.2.2; see also 1.2). Clearly SFL exerts a major influence upon the text-analytical procedures of CDA. But while this can be seen to be a common *linguistic*-theoretical thread uniting procedural approaches in CDA, I have argued that it is not a *socio*-theoretical thread, in the sense of being derived from or grounded in critical social theory (see 1.2).

Fairclough (1995: 2) notes that a characteristic of his framework is that ‘it combines a Bakhtinian theory of genre (in analysis of discourse practice) and a Gramscian theory of hegemony (in analysis of social practice)’ (parenthesis in original). It also combines a number of other theoretical perspectives, such as Pêcheux on interdiscourse, Marx and Althusser on ideology, and Foucault on orders of discourse and power. The relationship between social theory and the three tiers of discourse in Fairclough’s three-dimensional model is illustrated in *Fig. 1*.

Fig. 1. The relationship between discourse and social theory in CDA

Text	Halliday (SFL: dialectic of the text and the context)
Discourse practices	Foucault (orders of discourse) Bakhtin (intertextuality) Pêcheux (interdiscourse)
Social practices	Marx (ideology) Gramsci (hegemony) Althusser (ideological state apparatuses) Foucault (power)

Based on Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995, 2001)

There are three levels of discourse in Fairclough’s model: the text, discourse practices, and social practices. Fairclough theorises each of these levels by reference to a particular body of thought. At the level of discourse practices the range of theorists which are drawn on includes Foucault (*passim*), Bakhtin (1981, 1996) and Pêcheux (1982). At the level of social practices it includes Marx (*passim*), Gramsci (1971), and Althusser (1971). Each thinker contributes a particular perspective to Fairclough’s conception of discourse. This range of influences is quite broad and the table represented in *Fig. 1* does not include all of them. There are more theorists whose work could be added, particularly at the levels of discourse practices and social practices (cf. Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). But at the level of the text this is not the case. Here CDA has relied exclusively on Hallidayan linguistics.

It was noted in Chapter One (1.1) that within the framework of recent western philosophy, there are two traditions of critical social theory which interest this thesis. One tradition extends from Hegel through Marx to the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and the other extends from Nietzsche through Heidegger to the poststructuralism of Foucault and Derrida.

SFL is not this type of social theory and it is for this reason that it does not seem adequate as a basis in CDA for the critical theorisation of procedure at the level of the text.⁴ This also explains the interest of this study in the thought of Adorno, Derrida and Habermas. Adorno (1967, 1973, 1974, 2000) and Derrida (1976, 1981a, 1988, 1995) are important because of the procedural techniques of analytical problematisation which both of them use in their work; and Habermas (1984, 1987b, 1989a, 1989b, 1992, 1996) is important because his philosophy is characterised by a concern for procedures of discussion. These aspects of the work of each of these thinkers are illustrated in (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Critical Social Theory and the Text as a Critical Object

Adorno	Procedure: immanent critique of objects
Derrida	Procedure: deconstruction of texts
Habermas	Discussion: public sphere; communicative action

In the sections which follow the perspectives of these thinkers are introduced and their relevance for this thesis defined. Once a procedural basis for critical reading has been identified, I will then examine how we might also theorise the discussion which accompanies this. We will therefore be moving from one procedural theorisation, of ‘critical reading’, to another, of ‘discussion’.

4.3 Immanent critique and deconstruction: towards a procedural theorisation of critical reading

4.3.1 Adorno and the immanent critique of the object

Adorno was a member of the Frankfurt School of critical theorists. The Frankfurt School is most associated with the philosophical Marxism of Benjamin, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Adorno himself, and more recently Habermas. In their work the critical theorists undertook an extended critique of German idealist and materialist philosophy. This took the form of a dialogic engagement with a wide range of philosophical positions in the thought of, among

⁴ Relevant in this context is an observation of Fairclough that he had not been entirely happy with relying on SFL to theorise the text in his own model of CDA, but that he had not been able to pursue this (personal communication).

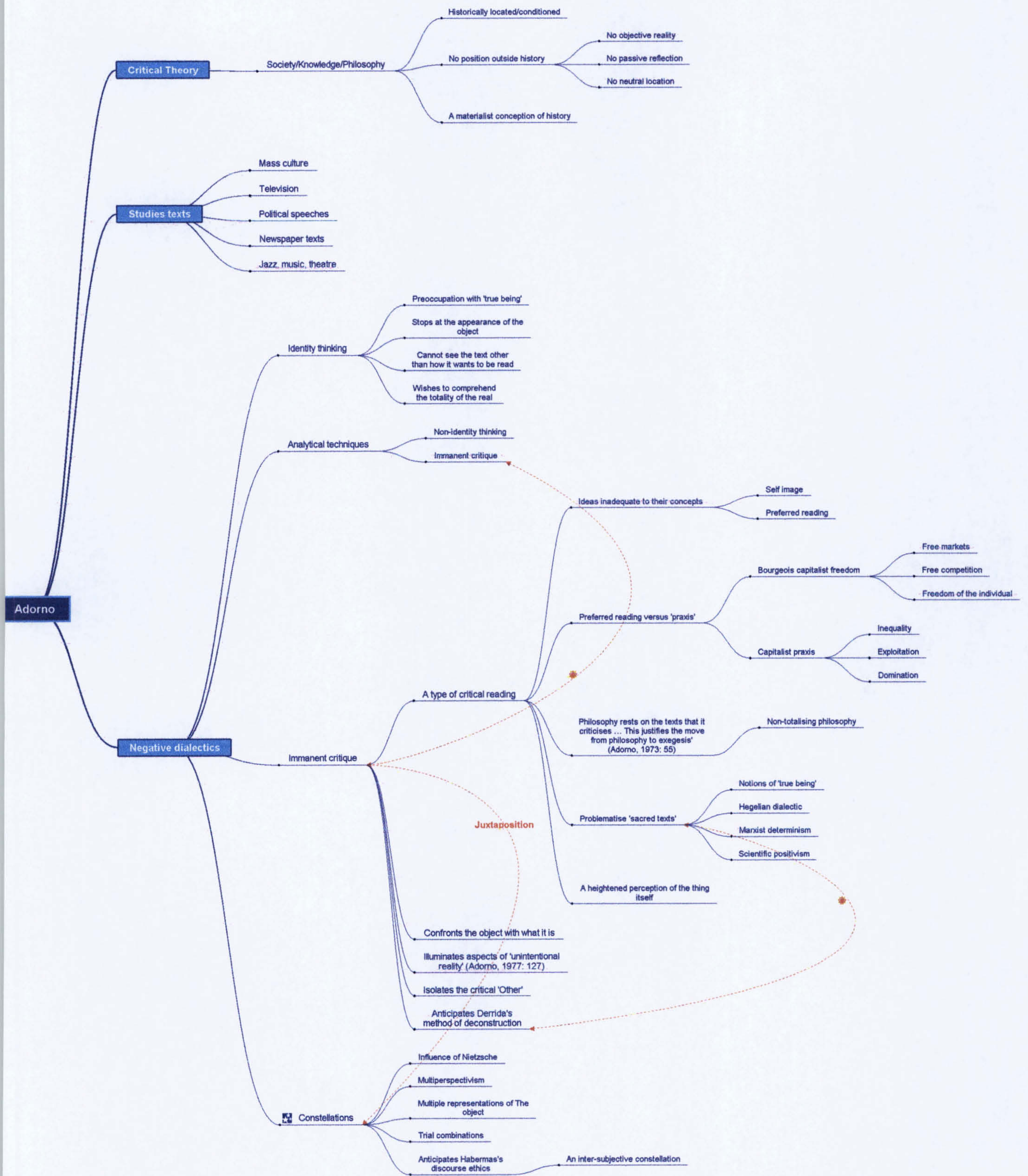
others, Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche. In this process the critical theorists distanced themselves, to a greater or lesser degree, from a range of standard Hegelian as well as classical Marxist positions on the nature of social progress, history, subjectivism and truth, while simultaneously reformulating and reapplying these understandings for the purposes of elaborating a critical theory of society. The critical theorists argued that any understanding of philosophy or society had to be historically located; that is, located and practised within the confines of a materialist conception of history because all knowledge, in their view, is historically conditioned. They therefore rejected, as did Nietzsche, the idea that there was an objective reality which could be passively reflected upon, arguing instead that social theorists are themselves a part of social and historical processes and therefore unable to stand apart from those processes (Held, 1990). Although all knowledge is seen as historically conditioned, Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse sought to develop analytical techniques, united under the title 'immanent critique' or 'immanent criticism', by which independent moments of critical insight might be made possible: 'only then will a critical social consciousness retain its freedom to think that things might be different some day' (Adorno, 1973: 323). It is these techniques, which they all to some extent shared, that can provide an initial theoretical framework for the critical reading of texts.

There are a number of reasons why Adorno's work is important in this respect. First, Adorno's view of immanent critique was theoretically the most developed of the critical theorists based as it was upon his own interpretative philosophy of 'Negative Dialectics'. Second, he shared and also developed theoretically Nietzsche's multiperspectival approach to knowledge, but rather than calling it 'multiperspectivism' Adorno named his a 'constellations' perspective. Third, 'immanent critique' and 'constellations' may be said to anticipate respectively Derrida's approach to deconstruction and at least some aspects of the discourse ethics of Habermas, making Adorno a key thinker in forming a theoretical link between the modernism of Habermas and the poststructuralism of Derrida (see Ryan, 1982; Jay, 1984). A final reason for adopting Adorno is that of all the critical theorists his work has a practical textual dimension which is not present in the work of the other Frankfurt theorists. This is because Adorno devoted much of his time to the study of mass culture, and within that to the study of texts. These textual studies included extended critical commentaries on American television programmes and television culture (Adorno, 1957, 1967), on the speeches and propaganda of American fascist agitators and American extremist groups (Adorno, 1994), and 'a content analysis' of a daily astrological column in the *Los Angeles*

Times (ibid). He also wrote a great deal on Jazz, classical music, and theatre (Adorno, 2000). Unlike Foucault, whose studies of discourse largely bypassed texts, Adorno took a keen interest in them. From a CDA perspective this seems promising. An overview of the main features of Adorno's thought and how these relate to critical reading are presented in the mind map on the following page (*Fig. 3*). Further maps of this kind are included for each of the principal thinkers introduced in this chapter. Variations of these were also distributed to students as class handouts.

In Adorno's perception of immanent critique 'objects' (e.g. social institutions, ideological concepts and beliefs) are judged according to whether they meet their own criteria of truth; that is, according to their own conceptions of what they think they are. According to Adorno, the role of immanent critique in critical theory is to 'transform the concepts which it brings, as it were from outside, into what the object left to itself seeks to be, and confront it with what it is' (Adorno, 2000: 177). In other words, in the study of any object we must first record the object's preferred idea of itself which the object publicly seems to wish to present and then compare that self image with what the object is (or does) in its actual existence. For Adorno, if this is done in a systematic way, it may become possible to detect contradictions or disjunctures between the object's self-image and what the object appears to be in practice, thus allowing the self-conception of the object to be problematised and possibly overturned. Adorno draws on the influence of Hegel in this respect, who said: 'Genuine refutation must penetrate the power of the opponent and meet him on the ground of his strength; the case is not won by attacking him somewhere else and defeating him where he is not' (Hegel quoted in Adorno, 2000: 115).

Importantly, for Adorno, the move to critique occurs from within; that is, from within the object's own self-conception. For Adorno all objects, and here it is useful to think of texts, which are presented as having certain meanings, or as belonging to a certain meaning classification, often have 'definitions not contained in the definition of the class' (Adorno: 1973: 150). That is, objects cannot necessarily delimit what they are; they will often include elements which have not been properly or fully accounted for. For example, if the ideals of bourgeois capitalism (e.g. justice, equality, freedom, and fair exchange), are contrasted with how they operate in practice, they fail to live up to their own criteria, and in Adorno's view are thereby negated (Held, 1990). This is because bourgeois capitalism includes, as part



of its praxis, features such as inequality, injustice and exploitation which undermine and problematise its self-conception, i.e. that which 'left to itself, [it] seeks to be' (Adorno, op cit: 150). Bourgeois capitalism therefore fails against its own standards and ideals. Immanent critique is thus a method for showing how an object's self-conception may in practice be problematic to itself, and according to Adorno (1967: 32), it is 'through the analysis of [the object's] form and meaning' that these potential contradictions may be brought to the fore.

If Adorno employs immanent critique as a means of closely analysing and problematising the object, I would suggest that in any critical reading of a text we might do something similar and use a procedure of immanent critique for closely analysing and problematising the text. A procedure of immanent critique centred on a text would involve a detailed comparison of how the text seems to want to be read, the text's *dominant* or *preferred* reading (Hall, 1990), with how the text appears in practice, its *textuality* (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). The point is to look for possible inconsistencies between the preferred reading and other meanings which also appear to be present in the fabric of the text. First, what does the text seem to be saying? Second, having examined it very closely, how well does the text succeed in saying it? In this way the perception which the text has of itself – its preferred reading – might be problematised.

Adorno's philosophy, like Nietzsche's, is non-totalising: it rejects the idea of a correspondence between the subject and full comprehension of the object (Jay, 1977). Adorno thought of this as a fiction, and gave it the name 'identity thinking'. Identity thinking stops at the appearance of the object. That is, it accepts the object at face value and does not look beyond how the object wants to be received or understood. To identity thinking Adorno opposes 'non-identity thinking'. Non-identity thinking is a kind of deconstructive thinking: it 'sets out to free dialectics from affirmative traits' (Held, 1990: 203), that is, from traits which (a) presuppose dialectical reconciliation and (b) which overemphasise the role of the subject in the evolution of history. Non-identity thinking also enables us to (c) free our thought from systematising philosophies; from philosophies which seek to explain the totality of the real, like Hegelian idealism, Marxist determinism and scientific positivism. For Adorno, it is the capacity of non-identity thinking to isolate and identify the imbalances and contradictions within the object which makes it critical. Non-identity thinking is therefore a type of critical practice. It maps the object and looks for points of disturbance, unevenness, and contradiction within the self-image of the object. The method which non-identity thinking employs for

mapping and problematising the object is that of immanent critique (cf. 2.2.2). In Adorno's words: 'Immanent criticism of [objective] phenomena seeks to grasp, through the analysis of their form and meaning ... a heightened perception of the thing itself' (Adorno, 1967: 32).

Immanent critique is potentially in these terms a procedure for mapping and problematising texts, and for developing a heightened critical perception of them. This becomes more apparent if 'text' is substituted for 'object' and 'critical reading' for 'immanent critique'. If this is done, negative dialectics, non-identity thinking, and immanent critique may be observed to take on a more textual and exegetic complexion. Adorno seems to be aware of this when he says: 'Philosophy rests on the texts that it criticises, and it is in dealing with them that the conduct of philosophy becomes commensurable with tradition. This justifies the move from philosophy to exegesis' (Adorno, 1973: 55). Adorno thus anticipates Derrida's deconstruction of western philosophy or 'metaphysics' by calling for the immanent critique of 'sacred texts' (ibid: 55), particularly those of Hegel, of Marxist determinism, and of logical positivism in the natural sciences.

Complementing immanent critique in negative dialectics are 'constellations'. This is the Nietzschean idea that in order to reach any approximation of the object, one representation will not do. What is necessary are multiple representations of the object, or a variety of views around it. In Adorno's words: 'As a constellation, theoretical thought circles the concept it would like to unseal, hoping that it might fly open like the lock of a well-guarded safe-deposit box: in response not to a single key or a single number, but to a combination of numbers' (Adorno, 1973: 163). Constellations, by bringing together various perspectives on the object therefore provide a basis for knowledge formation: 'philosophy has to bring its elements ... into changing constellations, or, ... into changing trial combinations which can be read as an answer' (Adorno, 1977: 127). What Adorno and some of his interpreters seem to miss is the possibility of each element of the constellation issuing from a different subject, rather than from a solitary subject-philosopher who through the medium of a philosophical critique trials different interpretive combinations on the object. Adorno's method is therefore not multi-subjective. This is the route which is instead taken by Habermas (1984, 1987a, 1987b), whose theory of communicative action rests upon an Adornian intersubjective constellation derived from the validity claim perspectives of more than one subject; that is, upon a notion of *intersubjective* as opposed to *subject-centred* reason. It is in the multi-

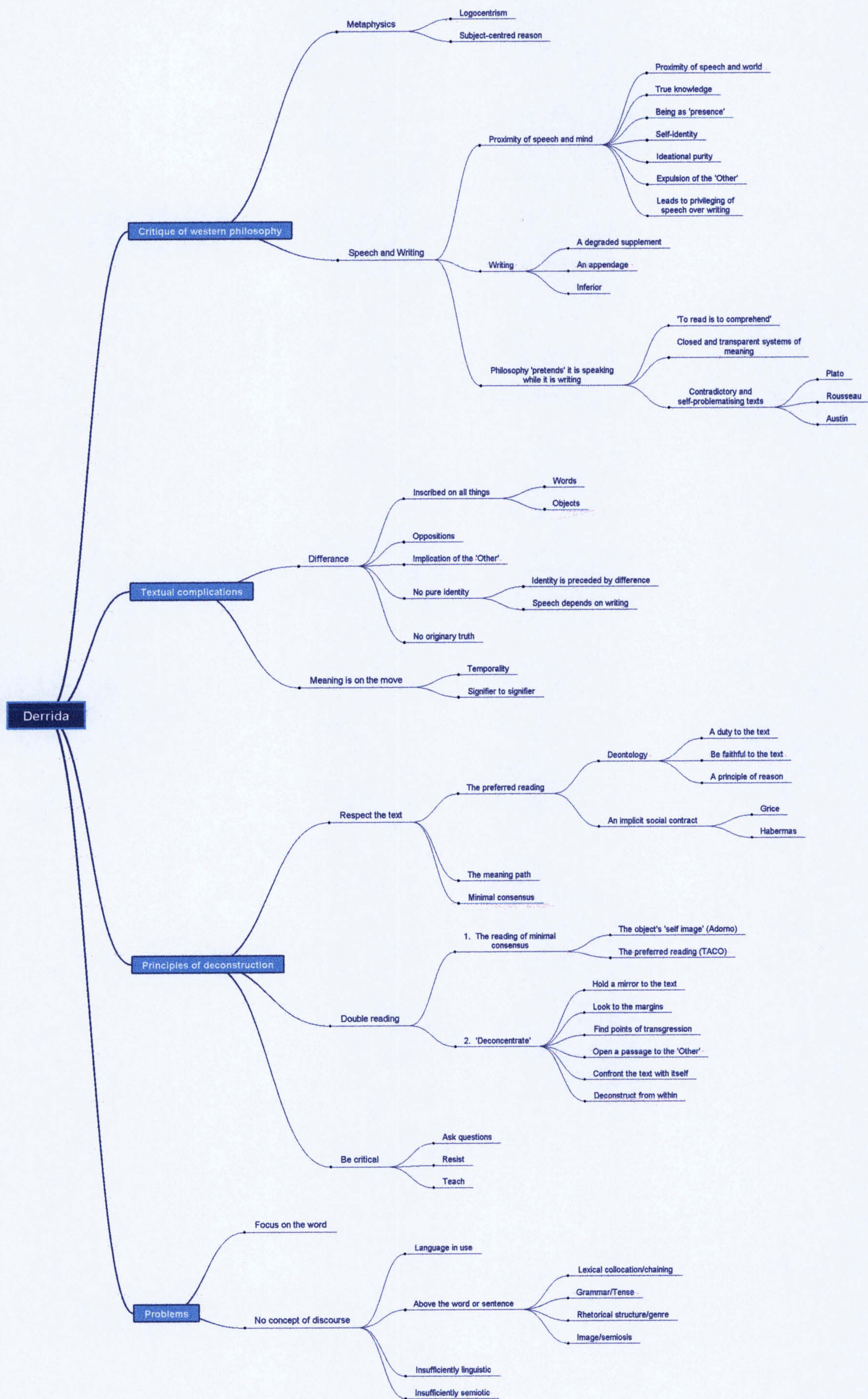
subjective potential of Adorno's approach that his constellations perspective may be said to anticipate in some ways the discourse ethics of Habermas.

According to Adorno, it is through the juxtaposition of constellations with immanent critique that it becomes possible to illuminate aspects of 'unintentional reality' (Adorno, 1977: 127); that is, to see what is not usually seen when looking at the object, because of the tendency towards identity thinking and an acceptance of the way in which the object wishes to be received. In relation to the text this tendency towards identity thinking may be interpreted as a willingness to look no further than the preferred reading and how the text seems to want to be read. If the text however is made the subject of an immanent critique in combination with a constellations perspective, the following educational interpretation seems possible. In a critical reading the perspectives of students may be said to represent a constellation of opinions about a text; this is because the text has been read from the individual perspective of each member of the class. In the ensuing discussion these perspectives are made public in the contexts of group and open-class discussion, as well as in the context of a possible problematisation of the text. This problematisation is not guaranteed but will occur whenever the text can be shown to include elements which do not seem to be properly or fully accounted for. If this can be demonstrated, the text may be said to project a meaning which is not part of its preferred reading, and which therefore seems to undermine its intent (see 5.3.3).

4.3.2 Derrida: the critique of western philosophy

In the following sections (4.3.2 and 4.3.3) I show how Derrida's conception of deconstruction complements Adorno's view of immanent critique and how taken together they may provide a basis for a theorised procedural framework for the critical reading of texts. The discussion of Derrida's thought which is presented is summarised in *Fig. 4*. In this first section I describe the theoretical motivation behind deconstruction. This will help to clarify how Derrida's deconstructive method has come about and how it is relevant to this study.

Derrida's thought is best characterised as a critique of western philosophy, or 'metaphysics', and of the 'logocentrism', or subject-centred claims to truth, on which it rests (Norris, 1984; McCarthy, 1989; Critchley, 1999a, 1999b). For Derrida, western philosophy is complicit in maintaining the fiction of the possibility of a true correspondence between the subject mind and a knowable object universe and it has done this through the systematic privileging of speech over writing.



The possibility of true knowledge is sustained because spoken words are seen as sharing a more immediate proximity to thought and to reason than writing: 'logocentrism ... also a phonocentrism: absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of being, of voice and the ideality of meaning' (Derrida, 1976: 11). In other words, to speak is also to be consciously present to the self; to speak is to know one's mind; to know one's mind is to know truth (Spivak, 1976: lxviii).

This proximity of speech to thought entitles speech to a privileged position in relation to true knowledge of the world because speech, in its immediate proximity to meaning and thought, is also more immediate than other forms of signification to the world which it describes: 'the voice is closest to the signified, whether it is determined strictly as sense ... or more loosely as a thing' (Derrida, 1976: 11). Moreover, speech came into being first: it historically preceded writing. The privileging of speech over writing has the effect of downgrading and de-privileging writing. Writing is made into a secondary and degraded appendage to speech, a substitution or repetition, which distracts from the ideational purity of speech and its proximity to mind. 'Writing' in these terms is thus presented as an inadequate means of accessing true knowledge.

In his work Derrida records many instances of the explicit downgrading of writing in the works of Plato, Hegel, Husserl, Levi-Strauss, Rousseau, Saussure and other representative 'logocentric' thinkers. For example, in *Of Grammatology* (1976), he describes how Saussure defines 'the object and project of general linguistics' as being speech alone, and not speech *and* writing: 'The linguistic object is not defined by the combination of the written word and the spoken word: *the spoken form alone constitutes the object*' (Saussure quoted in *Of Grammatology*, 1976: 31; Derrida's emphasis).

In *Dissemination* (1981b) the debasement of writing is recorded as going back to Socrates, who refused to write any of his thought down on the grounds that the written word would contaminate the purity of his ideas, and so it was left to his student Plato to preserve his master's thoughts in the lesser medium of writing. In a similar vein Rousseau is quoted on 'the tyranny of writing [which] by imposing itself on the masses ... influences and modifies language' (quoted in *Of Grammatology*, op cit: 41). The great evil for Rousseau is that through writing spellings can become distorted, which then almost inevitably lead to wrong

pronunciations and the debasement of the purity of spoken language away from its originary pre-written form, and hence also away from its intimacy with true being.

The key issue for Derrida is that philosophy while downgrading writing to a mere appendage of speech has operated according to the illusion that philosophical truths can nevertheless be preserved 'uncontaminated' within the written word. Another way of looking at this is to say that philosophy has condemned writing and privileged speech through the medium of writing and in Derrida's opinion chooses to overlook this. Derrida asks how this identification of truth with speech came about. If speech is put first and writing second, then in his view this differentiating process must have occurred prior to the privileging of speech. If speech is the ground of truth, then there can be nothing prior to speech, and yet the act of making speech equivalent to truth must have occurred prior to this. As Rivkin and Ryan (2000: 339) note: 'If philosophy is about intelligibility, doesn't that require some prior distinction between what is intelligible and what is sensible or material or physical or graphical?' Similarly then with logocentric truth, is that not also derived from something else which precedes it? If this is so, then this kind of truth is not as complete, self-identical and grounded as it assumes itself to be.

For Derrida the 'something else' which precedes logocentric truth is the Saussurean process of difference, in which words/signs achieve their meaning as a result of their difference from other words/signs. There are no self-identical words or signs. This means that for one meaning to be established it must be as the result of a difference from another meaning. For example, without a conception of evil there cannot be a conception of good, without a conception of the outside there can be no conception of the inside, and without a conception of falsity there can be no conception of truth. This also means in Derrida's view that there can be no originary or pure notion of good, of the outside, or of truth which does not already include the implication of its 'Other'. In each case, the opposition which enables them to be defined is already implicated in their constitution and it is this principle which Derrida applies to metaphysical thinking. For Derrida, logocentrism has operated as though there is nothing prior to the self-identical truth of speech and mind. It claims identity by suppressing what makes it possible: namely, 'difference'. The process of expulsion of oppositional 'Others' is thus ignored in the interests of providing pure grounds for truth, identity, and meaning, and of placing these at the beginning of philosophy in which they exist prior to their 'Others'. These 'Others', writing for example, are then articulated as secondary, inferior and

supplementary additions to an originary truth. As Rivkin and Ryan (2000: 340) put it: 'Philosophy, in other words, relies on a sleight of hand, a manoeuvre of substitution that places its real origin in difference outside its desired origin in identity (of truth, of reason, of ideas welded to the mind in the logos etc.)' (parenthesis in the original).

The instability of self-identity as truth is further destabilised by the temporality of meaning. Meaning never stands still. Any concept or idea exists temporally and must be subjected to continual repetition through time in order to maintain 'the illusion of permanent presence' (Rivkin and Ryan, *ibid*: 340). No meaning can ever be fully grasped in its entirety, complete and whole, in its full 'presence', because we exist in time and time does not stop. Meaning is therefore forever on the move, never stationary and pure.

The temporal instability of meaning is further complicated by Derrida's view of the sign. In place of Saussure's (1983) relationship between the signifier and the signified, Derrida posits only a relationship between signifiers: 'The meaning of meaning ... is infinite implication, the indefinite referral of signifier to signifier ... its force is a certain pure and infinite equivocality which gives signified meaning no respite, no rest, but engages in its own *economy* so that it always signifies again and differs' (Derrida, 1978: 29; original emphasis). For Derrida signifiers point away from themselves to other signifiers which in turn point to yet other signifiers *ad infinitum* (Harland, 1987: 135). In these circumstances it is impossible to halt the perpetual movement of meaning. It is akin to looking a word up in a dictionary and then finding five other words offering to stand in for the word you have looked up; looking these up leads to yet more words, which, if also looked up, lead to yet more words and further and yet further spillage of meaning, further 'disseminations', away from the point where you started. To this combination of temporal *difference* and meaning *deferment* Derrida gives the name *différance*. *Différance* captures both terms at once, while being neither wholly one nor wholly the other. It is an 'undecidable'. *Différance* is Derrida's favoured neologism for the way meaning is entered into 'a play of differences' by being at once differential in time, differential between signs, and deferred between the endless play of signifiers (Derrida, 1981a: 27).

When the texts of western philosophy claim stability by ignoring temporality, and invoke pure presence from signification, they do so by suppressing *différance*. In other words, western philosophy ignores that it is a text and acts as though it were self-identical speech.

Moreover, it ignores that it is a text whose meaning has depended on a written iterative process in order to arrive in the present. In other words the privileging of speech over writing has always been dependent on this idea being rendered as a written text. Derrida presses home this argument to the point where writing is made more primordial than speech on the grounds that it is only through the systematic repression of writing that speech and its identity with mind have been made possible. It is not that writing has in fact historically preceded speech, but that the repression of writing represents 'a pervasive symptom of centrism ... [a] longing for a centre, an authorising pressure which spawns hierarchised oppositions ... an entire structure of investigation' (Spivak, 1976: lxix).

At stake here ... are all the oppositions that dominate western thought – mind and matter, spirit and world, intelligibility and sensibility, interior and exterior, culture and nature, the true and the false, good and evil, the authentic and the artificial, etc ... such oppositional thinking is only possible on the basis of what it banishes as secondary to all of its values. (Rivkin and Ryan, 2000: 341)

The assumptions of identity, of non-temporality, and of meaning which is present to itself, according to Derrida, pervades the texts of western philosophy to the extent that they become unproblematically closed and self-evident systems of meaning. One only has to read them to understand them because, in Derrida's words: 'The philosophical text has always believed itself to be in control of its proper volume' (Derrida, 1982: x), i.e. of what it means to say. Moreover, because the text 'speaks' as though it were speech, it believes that it is able to express through the application of logical arguments fundamental philosophical truths about the nature of knowledge and being. Now, for Derrida, this assumption creates all sorts of difficulties for a philosophy which wishes to ignore its historical and differential privileging of writing over speech. A written philosophy which pretends that it is speech and forgets that it is writing will always become 'entangled in textual complications beyond its power to fix and control' (Norris, 1987: 34). In Derrida's words:

... the philosophical text, although it is in fact always written, includes, precisely as its philosophical specificity, the project of effacing itself in the face of the signified content which it transports and in general teaches. Reading should be aware of this project, even if, in the last analysis, it tends to expose the project's failure. The entire history of texts ... should be studied from this point of view. (Derrida, 1976: 160)

By forgetting that it is written, and by ignoring difference, temporality and signification, western philosophy succumbs to the deception that it can preserve originary meaning and truth, that its texts are transparent, and that they always signify what they intend to mean. Derrida demonstrates, on the basis of meticulously close and careful readings of many of these texts, for example of Plato, Rousseau and more recently John Austin (see Derrida, 1976, 1981a, 1981b, 1982, 1988; also Searle, 1977) that far from being closed and transparent systems of meaning, these texts are often contradictory and self-problematizing, and that they may be made to slip from their preferred intentions. This is the move of deconstruction. Often this move will turn on the identification of a fragment – a word or phrase in a text – which is considered marginal and unimportant to the main argument, and is perhaps only in the text as an aside or secondary observation, and showing how this fragment may contain meanings and implications which if brought forward and placed alongside the text's main argument may be seen seriously to undermine that argument, to disturb its self-assumed harmony, and possibly to overturn it. Derrida applies this methodology generally to the philosophical texts that he reads.

4.3.3 Deconstruction: formulating a basis for critical reading

According to Derrida (1995: 239), to do deconstruction requires more than anything else the capacity to ask questions: 'The only attitude (the only politics – judicial, medical, pedagogical, and so forth) I would *absolutely* condemn is one which directly or indirectly, cuts off the possibility of an essentially interminable questioning, that is, an effective and thus transforming questioning' (parenthesis in original). His work is often characterised by a marked critical forthrightness. In *Points* (1995: 357), for example, he declares that 'The critical idea ... must never be renounced', that [critical] reading is: 'one of [deconstruction's] forms or manifestations,' and that in order to resist 'the danger' of the power of the press 'one must exercise one's critical judgement, speak, study, respond, increase the number of examples, create counter-powers, and above all invent new spaces and new forms, new types of publication and communication – and we must begin now preparing ourselves and students to do this' (ibid: 449).

The procedure for critical reading which is described on these pages is drawn from Derrida's writings on deconstruction, particularly where he articulates principles and procedures for critical reading. Derrida has written of method in many places. For example, in *Of Grammatology* (1976), particularly in the section on 'The Exorbitant Question of Method'

(157-64), in *Positions* (1981a), in *Limited Inc.* (1988) and in *Points* (1995), and it is these texts which I have used as my principal sources. Fairclough has said with reference to Foucault that it is not possible simply to apply Foucault's ideas on discourse to CDA, it is rather a matter of 'putting Foucault's perspective to work' within it (Fairclough, 1992a: 38). In a similar vein, I do not think it is possible simply to apply Derrida's ideas on deconstruction to an educational procedure for critical reading. Deconstruction must also be put to work and this necessitates a reading of Derridean deconstruction which operates 'across the grain' (Pope, 2003: 1) of Derrida's own texts while remaining faithful to the overall procedural format which exists there. With this caveat we may then ask what Derrida says about deconstructive procedures for reading texts, or 'critical reading'. Derrida does use the term. It first appears in English in the 1976 edition of *Of Grammatology* where he talks of the method of deconstruction as a 'doubling commentary', that is, first as a descriptive commentary of how the text wants to be read (its preferred reading), and second, as a fine-grained commentary which engages in and problematises the first. It is here that he notes: 'This moment of doubling commentary should no doubt have its place in a *critical reading*' (Derrida, 1976: 158; emphasis added). But he goes on:

To recognize and respect all its classical exigencies is not easy and requires all the instruments of traditional criticism. Without this recognition and this respect, critical production would risk developing in any direction at all and authorize itself to say almost anything. But this indispensable guardrail has always only *protected*, it has never *opened* a reading. (Derrida, 1976: 158; emphasis in original)

The 'indispensable guardrail', or preferred reading, is therefore the position from which critique begins; it is the point at which the text may be opened to its other possibilities. Deconstruction is thus a means of avoiding the closure of the text and of undermining its self-certainties. Moreover the text is problematised on its own terms, just as the object is in immanent critique. For Derrida, a critical or deconstructive reading has the following characteristics:

Derrida's principles of critical reading

- A critical reading respects how the text seems to want to be read; it adheres to norms of minimal intelligibility; it affirms what the text seems to want to say
- It takes place within the bounds of the text; it is intrinsic to the text
- It is a double reading; it is a doubling commentary

- It maps the text
- It inscribes itself upon the text
- It reinscribes the text through rigorous commentary
- It isolates features of the text which appear problematic to the dominant reading
- It shows the text what it does not seem to know; it reveals the text's self-transgression, its 'structural unconscious'; it problematises; it interrupts
- A critical reading deconstructs

(Based on Derrida, 1976, 1981a, 1981b, 1988, 1995)

These principles summarise the kinds of statements Derrida has made about deconstruction in his work. Derrida first outlines his reading method in *Of Grammatology* where he undertakes a deconstructive reading of Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*. In this text Derrida's argument hinges upon the ambivalent meaning of the French word *supplément* (supplement) in Rousseau's text. Rousseau, as we have seen, wishes to dismiss writing as a mere appendage of speech, a degraded and debasing 'supplement' which undermines the purity of the spoken word in its proximity to thought and reason. But Derrida notes that *supplément* has two meanings. On the one hand, it can mean something added on; and this is the sense, or 'centre', which Rousseau wishes to give it. On the other, it can also mean '*in-the-place-of*, ... as if one fills a void' (*Of Grammatology*: 1976: 145; emphasis in original). On this logic the supplement is only added on because there is something missing from the thing that it is being added on to, speech in this case. The supplement is therefore not simply an addition to speech but also a necessary restoration or replacement of something that is missing in speech. Writing in this perspective both adds to speech and restores it; it is not merely an appendage. Derrida by careful argument attempts to show how Rousseau has privileged only the additive sense of *supplément* and made this the centre of his text. But for Derrida *supplément* is an 'undecidable' which cannot be faithful to the centre of meaning which Rousseau wishes it to have. Using 'levers' which are therefore supplied by Rousseau's text, Derrida turns Rousseau's text back on itself and causes it to confront its own pathology, or 'structural unconscious' (*Limited Inc.*, 1988: 73). Derrida thus imitates the critical gesture of Adorno: when confronted with itself, the text may fail to live up to its own concept.

At stake in deconstruction is that it is a process of reading. As a process of reading Derrida insists that the critical reader must demonstrate a duty of care towards the text, towards what

in the first instance the text seems to be saying; he or she must respect the text: 'It means that we must remain faithful ... to the injunctions of the text' (Derrida, 1984: 124). This is the first act and the first principle of a critical reading. What distinguishes deconstruction as a form of critical reading is that it involves what Derrida calls a 'doubling commentary' (*Of Grammatology*, 1976: 158). By this he means that deconstruction involves essentially two readings of the text. In the first reading the critical reader endeavours to understand the text from the perspective of 'a relative stability of the dominant interpretation' (*Limited Inc.*, 1988: 143), or in terms of what I have referred to as the preferred reading (see 1.5.2). But this reading, as we have seen, 'has always only *protected*, it has never *opened* a reading' (*Of Grammatology*, op cit: 158). That is, it only reproduces the dominant interpretation; it does not problematise it by opening the text to other intrinsic possibilities. In the second reading, the critical reader undertakes a close reading of the text. In Derrida's words, this second reading 'aims at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of language that he uses' (ibid: 158). In other words, the second reading holds a mirror to the text and looks for structural incongruities between what the text seems to be saying and *how* this is constructed in the text.

An important point for Derrida within the 'doubling commentary' of a critical reading is that the first reading should not be understood as the reproduction of a primary or true meaning of the text, 'the originary and true layer of a text's intentional meaning; ... No, this commentary is *already* an interpretation' (*Limited Inc.*, 1988: 143; emphasis in original). It is important however that the first interpretation attempts to reproduce the dominant or preferred reading of the text in the form of a 'minimal consensus' concerning the text's intrinsic intelligibility: 'no research is possible in a community ... without the prior search for this minimal consensus' (*Limited Inc.*, ibid: 146). This first, and affirming, moment of reading represents for him nothing less than a 'principle of reason' and 'deontology' in the reading of texts (*Points*, 1995: 427 and 430). 'Otherwise', he writes, 'one could indeed just say anything at all and I have never accepted saying, or encouraging others to say, just anything at all' (*Limited Inc.*, op cit: 144-45; see also Critchley, 1999a: 24; and *Of Grammatology*, op cit: 158). With this understanding Derrida's procedural schematic for deconstruction may be said to involve two stages of interpretation. These may serve as the basis of a preliminary two-stage procedure for critical reading. This is presented in *Fig. 5*.

Fig. 5 TACO: a preliminary procedure

1. **Descriptive interpretation:** the preferred reading.
 - What is the preferred reading (the main message of the text; the reading which accords with the way the text seems to want to be read; the reading of minimal consensus)?
2. **Deconstructive (or immanent) interpretation:** the preferred reading measured against the textuality of the text.
 - Does any aspect of the text's internal structure appear to contradict or undermine the preferred reading?

In this procedure the first reading reproduces the apparent preferred reading as the first stage of interpretation. The second reading holds a mirror to the first and through a rigorous examination of the text (a discursive mapping) looks for possible 'blind spots' and incongruities which seem to have been passed over or neglected and which seem problematic to the first reading. This is the second stage of interpretation in which the text's immanent features are juxtaposed to the preferred reading. Questions which might be asked from this perspective include: 'What is the preferred reading, and how far does the text itself seem to confirm this reading? Do any 'imbalances' appear as a result of the second reading which are destabilising to the first, either because the text seems to have glossed over them, has treated them as marginal, or perhaps has deliberately ignored them?

Owing to the fact that deconstruction as conceived by Derrida is primarily a critique of logocentrism, this idea is couched in rather abstract terms. Derrida (1976: 159) believes that deconstruction must take place within the bounds of the text: 'our reading must be intrinsic and remain within the text.' In other words, it is not enough simply to be in disagreement with the text, there has to be some critical demonstration which engages the text from within, which inscribes itself upon the text. As Critchley (1999a: 26) puts it: 'A deconstructive reading must ... remain within the limits of textuality, hatching its eggs within the flesh of the host.' This does not mean that texts do not refer to other texts or to other contexts, they do, only that if arguments are to be made against the text, it has to be from the text's *texture* that they must be derived.

If there is a problem with Derrida's approach, it is that, like Foucault, he seems to have a narrow view of discourse in relation to its role in the construction of meaning in texts. Where

Foucault often seems sententially preoccupied with statements (see Chapter Two: 2.3.3), Derrida seems preoccupied with the metaphorical ambivalence of single words and phrases (Harland, 1993). There is little concern, for example, for grammar, word collocation, or genre, or the knowledge frameworks within which texts are interpreted (see 4.4.3). He also neglects modes of meaning construction in the visual domain. Derrida's view of discourse is thus a restrictive one. If Derrida's doubling commentary is to account for the wider meaning modalities of the text and the social values and frames these features seem to suggest, it needs more procedural detail about, for example, the frame of the text (where it begins and ends), the topic (what is it?), and the reading position which is set up for the reader, and from which the preferred reading is accessed. If we add these dimensions to Derrida's procedural framework (*Fig. 6*), it looks like this:

Fig. 6 The Text as a Critical Object: four stages of interpretation

1. **Descriptive interpretation:** the frame of the text, the visual organisation of the text, the topic, the reading position, the preferred reading, and the ideal reader.
2. **Representative interpretation:** description and interpretation of the image, grammar, vocabulary and genre choices of the text.
3. **Social interpretation:** the social context(s) which the text seems to be a part of: e.g. contexts of gender, race, economy, politics, family, class, income, age, sex, property, geography, etc.
4. **Deconstructive interpretation:** aspects of the descriptive, representative and social dimensions of the text which appear to contradict or undermine the preferred reading.

This, in brief, is the critical reading procedure which I call TACO. The fuller framework is discussed in Chapter Five. In some respects, this may be thought of as an 'unfolding' of Derrida's doubling commentary so that it incorporates a broader view of discourse and is also more procedurally staged in relation to the 'second' commentary stage of Derrida's reading approach. This is now divided into representative, social and deconstructive stages of interpretation. The following questions (*Fig. 7*) summarise these stages and are discussed in Chapter Five (5.3.1-5.3.3):

Fig. 7 The Text as a Critical Object: questions

1. **Descriptive interpretation**
 - What is the frame of the text and how does the text look?
 - What is the topic?
 - How is the topic being presented (e.g. formal, informal, persuasive, aggressive, angry, friendly, humorous, comic, etc.)?
 - What is the preferred reading (the main message of the text; the reading which accords with the way the text seems to want to be read; the reading of minimal consensus)?
 - Who might be the ideal reader of this text? E.g. A person who ...

2. Representative interpretation⁵

- What social values can be attached to the discourse features of the text (image/vocabulary/grammar/genre)?

3. Social interpretation

- What social frameworks is the text a part of (e.g. gender, race, economy, business, politics, family, class, income, age, sex, property, geography, etc.)?
- What typical kinds of social knowledge do these frameworks suggest?

4. Deconstructive interpretation

- Does any aspect of the text's structure (descriptive, representative, social) appear to contradict or undermine the preferred reading?

These additions seem appropriate because they fill in the textual spaces which exist in both the procedures of immanent critique and in those of deconstruction, where in both cases the individual discourse features of objects (Adorno) and of texts (Derrida) are not considered. By turning a two-stage procedure into a four-stage procedure, my aim has been to develop the implications of the procedures of immanent critique and deconstruction in a more linguistic and discourse-oriented direction, one which also incorporates Foucauldian as well as more traditional CDA perspectives on discourse and text.

4.3.4 Readers and reading in a TACO approach: key terms and concepts

One issue which requires clarification at this point is my perception of **the reader** in relation to reading and interpretation in the context of this framework. Where reference is made to readers in this context, I am referring to *critical* readers who are employing this framework to read texts, and not to readers in general and to how they might interpret texts. References to readers in this study, whenever it concerns interpretation in relation to use of the TACO framework, therefore denotes readers who are conscious of being engaged in a *deliberate* and *deliberating* procedure of critical reading. This places a somewhat different emphasis on reading and interpretation in this model than is common in some other approaches where the emphasis seems to be more on the processes of interpretation of the non-critical reader than with the deliberate practice of the critical analyst (see 5.2.1 for further discussion). The other issue concerns the terminology I am using. Some initial justification of key terms and also of the nature of each of the four stages of the framework would be useful at this point. These are also discussed in Chapter Five (5.3.3). With regard to critical reading, the key terms are 'preferred reading', 'reading position', 'topic', and 'ideal reader'. I will deal with each of these in turn.

⁵ A more detailed list of questions for the discourse features (image, vocabulary grammar, genre) of the representative interpretation stage is given in the full framework which appears in Chapter Five (5.3.2).

First, **the preferred reading**. This is a descriptive category and tool in a practice of critical reading. This was introduced and discussed in Chapter One (1.5.2) and has featured prominently in this study. Some further points can be made about this. As a descriptive category I have said that the preferred reading is the reading which accords with the way in which, from the perspective of the reader, the text seems to want to be read. In other words, it is the *apparent* argument, perspective, orientation, or purview of the text as it appears to the reader and is therefore *preferred* in the sense that the text itself seems to indicate this preference. How the text seems to want to be read is a decision which each individual reader of a text will make for him or herself based on his or her ‘intertextual’ knowledge and experience of texts (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986; Kristeva, 1986; Barthes, 1977). The reader has a lifetime’s experience of reading texts to draw on and, whenever a text is being read, this experience is applied to the text in order to reach some conclusion about what the text seems to be saying. The preferred reading in this approach is therefore the first ‘considered’ impression of what the text seems to be saying. Considered, because it is still a careful reading if not a highly detailed one. Its purpose is to reproduce, in the Derridean sense, the reading of minimal consensus, the *apparent* dominant meaning of the text.

I have said that the preferred reading is *cued* by the textual features of the text. These cues result from the meeting between the knowledge and experience of the reader and the meaning modalities of the text. The preferred reading is therefore not cued by the text alone, but requires the presence of the reader, and the reader’s textual knowledge and experience, in order for it to be realised. If the preferred reading is not simply cued by the text, neither then is it simply derived from the reader. Contrary to Widdowson (1995a, 1998), readers do not simply pragmatically read their own predilections into ‘inert’ texts (Widdowson, 1995a: 164). The texts that they read also project certain predilections or dispositions onto their readers by suggesting *reading* or *subject* positions from which they can be read. That is, the meaning modalities of the text will suggest a **reading position** or textual ‘vantage point’ for the reader from which the main message of the text seems most readily apparent and ‘readable’. The reading position of the text is the most effective locus for accessing the preferred reading.

The next distinction that needs to be introduced here is that between the preferred reading and **the topic**. The preferred reading and the topic are related categories of which the topic is the more general. If the preferred reading is for example that in the UK trials without juries are preferable to trials with them, then the topic might be for example ‘The British legal system’,

or ‘Trial by jury in the UK’, or even ‘Arguments against trial by jury in the UK’. This is what is meant by a topic, and this is what distinguishes the topic from the preferred reading. The topic is the most mundane summary of the reader’s reading of the text.

The next point is to define what is meant by **the ideal reader**. Like the other terms which have been discussed here the ideal reader is a descriptive category. It does not indicate true knowledge of particular readers. Like the topic and the preferred reading, the ideal reader is an ‘idealised’ construct which is cued in the meeting between the reader and the text. If the preferred reading is the reading which most accords with the way the text seems to want to be read, the ideal reader is the type of person to whom, in the view of a reader using this framework, the preferred reading would most appeal. That is, from the experience and knowledge of the reader, whether direct or indirect, of these types of texts and of the contexts in which they circulate, the type of person to whom the text is ‘ideally’ addressed.

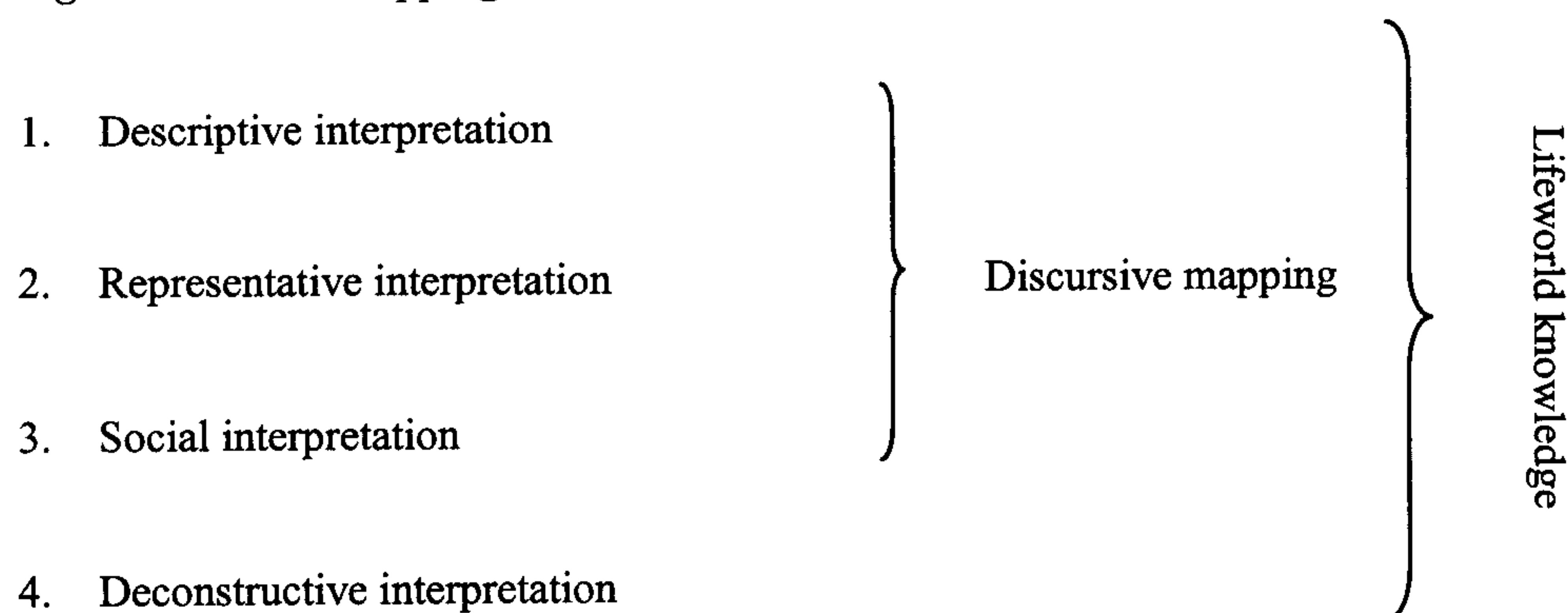
The descriptive categories of preferred reading, reading position, topic, and ideal reader are all elements within the first stage of the TACO framework: **the descriptive interpretation**. In order to reach decisions about these descriptive categories, the reader first has to frame the text by deciding what is included in it. Deciding on the boundaries of the text is by and large a personal decision on the part of the reader, although there are evidently advantages to be had in a discussion if all readers have read the same text. Some texts may suggest natural boundaries, for example by having lines drawn around them, but the same text could also be conceived of as one element in a much larger text, for example on the page of a newspaper. The main issue with framing is that texts are not naturally given, although they will often suggest intuitive limits. The advantage of framing the text is that it determines the boundaries of the object to be analysed. It therefore also constructs text as an object, in this case a critical object.

In addition to the descriptive interpretation, there are three additional stages in this framework. A more detailed description of each of the four stages is presented in Chapter Five (5.3.3) and so I will confine my comments to what are some of the key design considerations which relate to the framework’s conceptual construction. The second stage of the framework is **the representative interpretation**. This stage is concerned with the ‘local’ as opposed to ‘global’ meanings which discourse features imply for the critical reader’s perception of the text. This is to say that the local modalities of image, grammar, lexis, and genre may each suggest certain types of ‘value’ or meaning. For example, the choice of a

particular lexical feature if repeatedly associated with a person, a group, an object, or an institution in a text will have implications for how that person, group, object, or institution is being represented by the text. In this case the interest would be the collocative relations which the text seems to set up for its participants, and what these seem to imply about how the participant is supposed to be received by the reader. In the present era of Terror War the terrorist networks of Al Qaeda are, in the discourse of George Bush, negatively associated with terror, murder, oppression, and evil, while the US and allied response is positively associated with truth, freedom, and justice. The principal local point of knowledge construction in both these perspectives, that of Al Qaeda and that of the Bush administration, is that a certain view of the participants is implied. Similar local knowledges, values and perspectives may be implied by the use of aspects of image, grammar and genre/text type, and it is to these that the representative interpretation is directed. Having constructed a local knowledge base from the interpretation of these features of the text, it is possible to extrapolate more generally to the wider knowledge structures which also seem to be implied by the text. This is the stage of **the social interpretation** of the text.

This stage is related to the descriptive and representative interpretation stages because it is via the social knowledge which is the subject of the social interpretation stage that readers are able to undertake interpretation of the text at the first and second stages. The social interpretation stage is distinguished from these earlier stages by being the stage at which this social knowledge becomes an explicit point of discussion. This social knowledge is similar to the schematic knowledge frames of cognitive psychology and linguistics (cf. Schank and Abelson, 1977; Hymes, 1972, 1974; Goffman, 1974, Tannen, 1993). I have taken these concepts and relocated them to a critical theory context as 'lifeworld frames' and 'lifeworld scripts' (cf. Habermas, 1984, 1987b). These categories combine for me both the cognitive linguistic and the social theory dimensions of human knowledge and experience, and are my own terms. What they refer to is explained more precisely below (4.4.3), in the discussion of Habermas's thought, but a provisional description is that they represent social frameworks of knowledge and understanding into which human beings have been socialised (frames), and the typical characteristics and practices which they associate with them (scripts). Lifeworld frames and scripts thus represent the conceptual totality of an individual's experience of the world. This has the further implication that lifeworld knowledge is not only inherent to the first three stages of the framework but, as *Fig. 8* illustrates, is also a feature of **the deconstructive interpretation**. Without this knowledge neither discursive mapping nor deconstruction could occur.

Fig. 8 Discursive mapping



An important issue in the context of the different stages is that this not a ‘depth model’ of meaning and textual understanding. That is, I do not wish to suggest that by moving from one stage to the next the critical reader is developing a ‘truer’ understanding of the text. For reasons I have suggested in this chapter and in Chapter Three (3.2.3), I do not believe that truths of this kind are attainable. What is achieved by moving from one stage to the next is a greater level of detail regarding how the text seems to construct that aspect of the reality of which it is a part, but it does not follow that this greater detail is therefore also a greater truth. In my view the idea that knowledge only has value as truth is an illusory one. That the knowledge I can gain from studying texts closely might not be ‘true’ knowledge does not mean that it is therefore necessarily ‘false’ or ‘wrong’ knowledge, only that it is knowledge which does not claim truth for itself. That it is not true knowledge does not diminish its worth as knowledge. It also keeps knowledge open to processes of learning. If knowledge is to be worth having, it must be knowledge that is open to questioning and discussion. This for me is the point of learning, otherwise there would seem to be little to discuss. The different stages of the framework I am presenting in this thesis, although not offering deeper levels of ‘truth’, do offer views of the text which are taken from a variety of interpretative vantage points. The framework is thus a perspectival one by offering more than one view of the text.

A final issue is that the deconstructive interpretation is not obligatory. It should not always be the purpose of a *critical* reading to deconstruct the text, because it is not the case that all texts will succumb to such an interpretation. It may be that the closer reading of the text, which the second and third stages incorporate, just reaffirms the text’s preferred reading, without any incongruities or contradictions appearing. I wish to place particular emphasis on this point. Critical reading in this approach is not ‘critical’ because a text is deconstructed as a result of it, but because the text in question has made the object of a *deliberate* and

deliberating procedure of textual exegesis, *whether or not* that results in the deconstruction of the object text.

This conception of a critical reading arises on the one hand from the ‘positive’ and ‘productive’ reformulation of the concept of criticality which was presented in Chapter Two (2.2.2), and consequent to this, because the texts which might become the objects of a critical analysis in this approach *are not* determined by their possible implication in the discursive construction of relations of domination. In other words, crucial to this approach is that *any* text may be a critical object, and not just apparently manipulative or mystifying ones. This makes it possible to examine texts in a very wide range of genres, which may or may not be implicated in these mechanisms. For example, book and CD covers, different types of advertisements (for holidays, hearing aids, household appliances, supermarkets, cigarettes, alcohol, clothes, beauty products, etc.), and many other texts (e.g. lonely hearts columns, horoscopes, electricity bills, weather reports, sports commentaries, notices, signs, leaflets, bus tickets, etc.). Unlike many CDA approaches, which often seem to rely on analysing texts in which the discursive construction of domination can be demonstrated (cf. Van Dijk, 2001, 2004), this is not the overriding concern of this approach. For this reason there is no specific limit to the types of texts which can be analysed with it, and this is one of the more fundamental differences between the critical approach of this study and that which is familiar in CDA.

With this in mind it seems possible to say that the more ‘mundane’ or purely informational the text, the less likely it is that it will be deconstructed. A bus ticket for example will on the whole simply say what it seems to intend to say, e.g. that it is valid for a particular route, that it is ‘not transferable’, that the price of the ticket is as stated, and that the route is operated by the company whose logo appears in the corner, etc. It does not automatically follow from this however that more elaborate, multifaceted or complex texts, such as advertisements, magazine articles and newspaper reports, i.e. the familiar objects of textual analysis in CDA, will *always* be ‘deconstructable’, or that they will be deconstructable *most* or even *some* of the time. These texts may also be shown to say what they seem to intend to say. This issue is raised again in relation to the discussion of Chapter Six, where competing deconstructions and ‘non-deconstructions’ are offered, by myself and by the students of this particular class, of a text from a men’s magazine. It is this text on which the empirical data is based (see 6.2.4 and 6.2.5).

Although there will be texts, possibly many texts, which do not seem susceptible to a deconstructive interpretation, the purpose is still to take the text to that point, because what is achieved by going through the first three stages of the framework is a systematic **discursive mapping** of the way the text constructs, reconstructs and generally makes sense of that part of the reality to which it belongs. The process of discursive mapping of the text is therefore a *critical* practice (cf. 2.2.2; 5.3.3). It is critical not only for being a deliberate and deliberating practice, but also because all texts are inserted into a matrix of social, political and economic meaning relations, even the most mundane texts, and that is why *all* texts are subject to critical reading. Discursive mapping may therefore be understood as the staged process by which a text becomes a critical object. The text becomes a critical object because discursive mapping is not preparatory to a deconstructing practice, but is critical *in itself*. This distinguishes the TACO approach from CDA where the ‘critical’ nature of the analysis is dependent on the destabilisation of the text. This has the effect of narrowing considerably the range of texts to which CDA may be applied and would seem to limit the value and effectiveness of CDA as the study of ‘language as a form of social practice’ (Fairclough, 1989: 22; see also 5.2.1).

4.4 Communicative action: towards a procedural theorisation of classroom discussion

4.4.1 The critical theory of Jürgen Habermas: an educational perspective

Jürgen Habermas’s relevance to this study lies in the contribution he has made to theorising procedures of communication, discussion and knowledge formation (e.g. Habermas, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1989a, 1989b, 1992). He is, moreover, a *critical* theorist, and this gives his work a heightened relevance for CDA and for critical work more generally. His perspective is summarised in *Fig. 9*. The main concerns in this section are to identify those aspects of Habermas’s thought which can be recontextualised for the purposes of theorising the discussion of texts in the classroom. These fall into two main categories:

- The concept of a public sphere of rational-critical debate where people come together to make ‘public use of their reason’ (Habermas: 1989a: 27)
- A theory of communicative action based on the development of intersubjective understanding between cooperating individuals: ‘the straightforward perspective of acting subjects oriented to mutual understanding’ (Habermas, 1987a: 299).

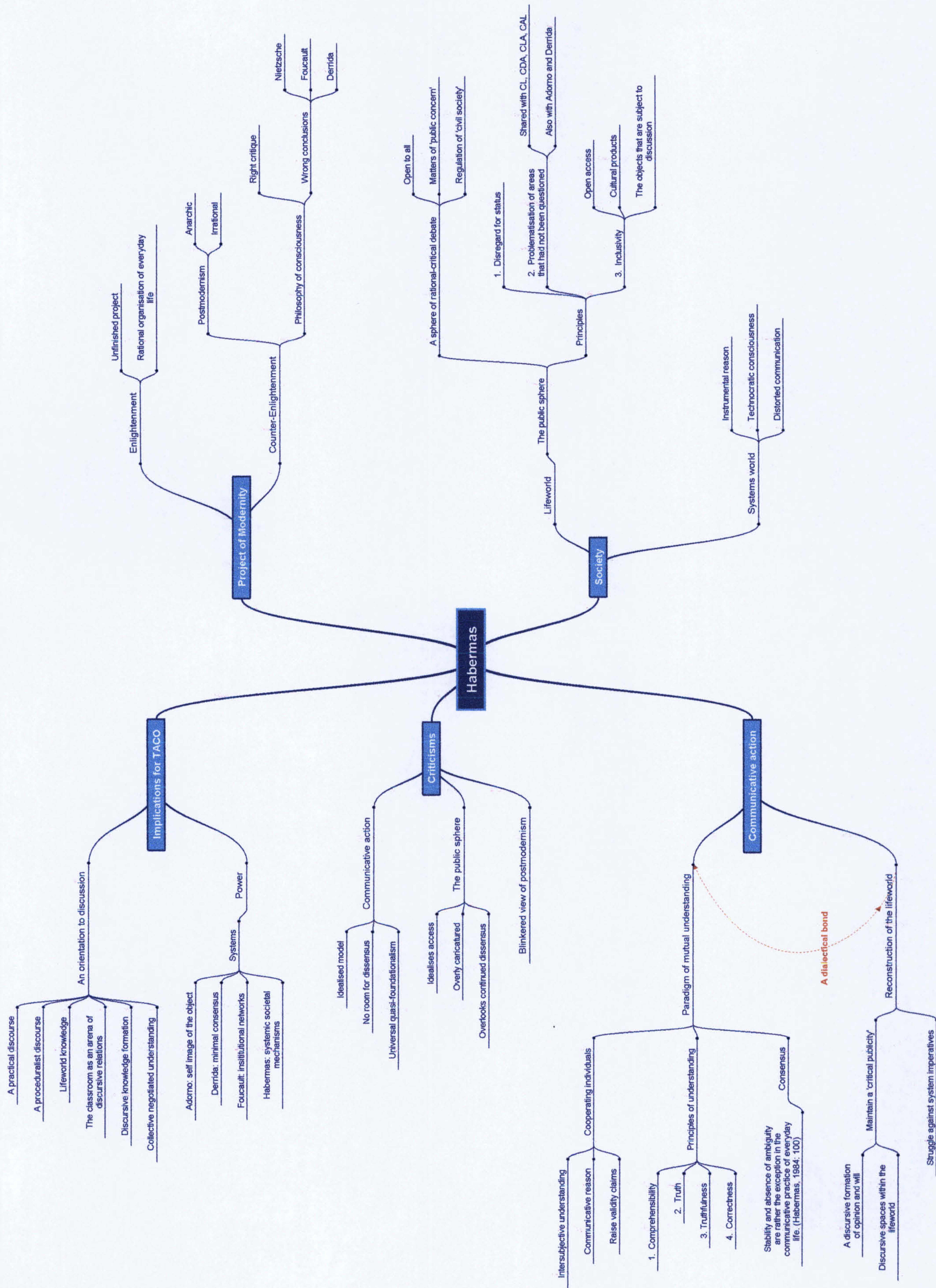


Fig. 9 The Thought of Habermas

Habermas (1981, 1987a) has developed these themes against the background of a critical concern to reestablish the aims of the Enlightenment as an ‘unfinished project’, and particularly in response to the ‘postmodern’ counter-Enlightenment discourses which he detects in the work of thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault and Derrida, as well as latently in the work of his Frankfurt School predecessors Adorno and Horkheimer. For Habermas the problem of Enlightenment reason is not that its emancipatory potential has been proved an illusion, as Adorno and Horkheimer (1997 [1944]) contended, but that the critique of Enlightenment reason which they and their postmodern counterparts have promulgated is a critique of a particular Cartesian or ‘metaphysical’ notion of reason. In this perspective reason, as we have seen, is centred on the idea of an individual knowing subject or rational being, the solitary thinker trying to make sense of the world. In the 19th century this view came in for sustained critique first from Hegel, who argued that consciousness and its development was historically as well as transcendently located. Marx went further and argued that consciousness itself was determined by the material conditions of production (Marx, 1964 [1844], 2000a [1845], 2000b [1859]). The critique of subject-centred reason also became the focus of Nietzsche, who wanted to demonstrate how it masked the will to power; and also of Adorno and Derrida. Subject-centred reason came to preoccupy the thought of the early Frankfurt School theorists to the point where they could see no way out of the colonisation of a reason based on individuals, a ‘lifeworld’ reason, by an instrumental reason based on capitalist management systems. For Derrida the critique of subject-centred reason became a deconstructionist critique of western philosophy itself.

Habermas wishes to draw our attention to the common discourse of subject-centred reason in the thought of these various philosophers in order to argue that while they are right to reject the philosophy of consciousness centred on the subject, they are wrong to draw the conclusions that they do (Benhabib, 1992; Outhwaite, 1996). There is ‘an alternative way out of the philosophy of the subject ... [T]he paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness ... has to be replaced by the paradigm of mutual understanding between subjects capable of speech and action’ (Habermas, 1987a: 294-6). In other words, subject-centred reason has to be replaced by a concept of communicative or *intersubjective* reason between cooperating individuals. Habermas wants us to retain a concept of rationality in which ‘participants in interaction ... coordinate their plans for action by coming to an understanding about something in the world’ (ibid: 296). This is an important observation in our context because from a TACO perspective this ‘something’ can be understood as a text and the ‘participants

in interaction' as students engaged in the discussion of a critical reading. The process of 'coming to an understanding about something in the world' is therefore also a possible opening to a pedagogic realisation of that process: 'Communicative reason is assessed in terms of the capacity of responsible participants in interaction to orient themselves in relation to validity claims geared to intersubjective recognition' (ibid: 314); it may therefore also be understood as a function of the classroom exchange of the textual interpretations which arise from a critical reading.

Habermas's response to the critique of subject-centred reason is a historical one, both in the sense of being a historical study of reason, and in the teleological sense of the chronology of his thought. Habermas's linguistic turn, which is encapsulated in his theory of communicative action, dates from the 1970s. In his earlier work dating from the 1960s (Habermas, 1989a [1961]) he followed Adorno and Horkheimer in charting the development of instrumental reason under capitalism, specifically in terms of the historical development of the bourgeois public sphere and the bureaucratic rationalisation of society which accompanied it. Both dimensions of his thinking, his critical conceptualisation of the public sphere and his theory of communicative action, are complementary to a procedural theorisation of discussion in the TACO classroom. I am going to discuss them in order so that I can demonstrate how Habermas's conception of a public sphere of 'rational-critical debate' has evolved into a theory of communicative action, and how his earlier thought, often obscured by a focus on his later thought, is relevant to such a theorisation.

4.4.2 The public sphere as a model of classroom discursivity

Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989a [1961]; henceforth *STPS*) is a history of the bourgeois public sphere from the beginning of the 18th to the end of the 19th centuries. In spite of its historical character the grounds for an initial theorisation of the TACO classroom as a type of discursive public space lie here. Habermas paints a picture of an 18th century public sphere which is realised in terms of a variety of public spaces of 'critical judgement' where people come together as 'a public making use of their reason' (ibid: 27). In the Europe of the early 18th century these spaces took the form of coffee houses, table societies and *salons* which later became augmented by the development of 'book clubs, reading circles and subscription libraries ... These constituted the public ... They formed the public sphere of a rational critical debate' (ibid: 51). Habermas, while largely conceiving of the public sphere as a unitary entity, recognises that it is in practice

made up of a variety of discursive spaces where people are able to enter into discussion on issues of public interest. A more explicit notion of multiple public spheres has been put forward by Calhoun (1992), Fraser (1992), and by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), and it is useful to think of the classroom as a representative example of one such sphere.

In Habermas's perspective the political task of the public sphere 'was the regulation of civil society' (*STPS*: 51) as a means of holding the state to account. According to Nancy Fraser (1992: 110-11), the Habermasian public sphere 'designates a theatre ... in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, and hence an institutionalised arena of discursive interaction ... it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state.' Or in Habermas's words:

By "public sphere" we mean first of all a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Access to the public sphere is open in principle to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere is constituted in every conversation in which private persons come together to form a public ... Citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion; thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and publicise their opinions freely. (Habermas, 1989b: 231)

The public sphere was able to perform its critical function effectively because the institutions which made it up, the coffee houses, *salons*, table societies, etc., operated according to a number of institutional criteria which they held in common. The first of these was that 'they preserved a kind of social intercourse that, far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether' (*STPS*: 36). Habermas recognises that this is an idealisation which was never properly realised, 'but as an idea it had become institutionalised and thereby stated as an objective claim. If not realised, it was at least consequential' (*STPS*: 36). If we relocate this to a university context, we might say that in principle this objective claim is also a feature of the university classroom wherever and whenever it is constituted as a space for learning and discussion. Learners enter the classroom in the context of certain institutional constraints and expectations regarding status, rights of participation, and the communicative roles which may be adopted while there; they therefore may be said, in principle, to leave status distinctions (which may or may not exist for them in other social contexts) outside the classroom. For Habermas, the mutual willingness to suspend status distinctions 'was based on

the justifiable trust that within the public – presupposing its shared class interest – friend or foe relations were impossible’ (STPS: 131). This allowed ‘reasonable forms of public discussion’ to occur (STPS: 131). Similarly, the shared learning interest of the learners in a university classroom may also be said to fulfil the same function.

The second criterion which the institutions of the public sphere held in common was that ‘discussion within such a public presupposed *the problematisation of areas that until then had not been questioned*’ (STPS: 36; emphasis added). Until the 18th century the institutions which had held a monopoly of interpretation on philosophy, on literature, and on the arts had been the church and the state, but with the development of capitalism these ‘culture products’ became commodities and ‘as commodities they became in principle generally accessible’ (STPS: 36). This meant that many topics which had hitherto not been opened to public interpretation and discussion became topics of discussion within the public sphere ‘in as much as the public defined its discourse as focusing on all matters of public concern’ (Calhoun, 1992: 13). The problematisation of areas that have not been questioned is a theme which Habermas shares not only with critical approaches to the study of discourse, but also as we have seen with the perspectives of Adorno and Derrida. These synergies are worth noting because the extent to which these perspectives ‘criss-cross’ one another, particularly in the thought of Habermas and Derrida, is not often recorded. At these nodal points they seem to agree much more than they disagree (see also 4.4.4).

The third criterion which Habermas identifies as held in common by the institutions of the public sphere underlines this point. This criterion was that the public sphere was inclusive. Anyone with access to cultural products (books, plays, journals, etc.) ‘as readers, listeners, and spectators could avail themselves via the market of *the objects that were subject to discussion*’ (STPS: 37; emphasis added). Again this is an idealisation, because the inclusivity of the public sphere depended upon the qualification of being ‘propertied and educated’ (STPS: 37). But the main point of interest here is not primarily the fact of inclusivity, although this is important, but that *the objects which are subject to discussion* may, in the same way as they are in Adornian immanent critique, be conceptualised as texts. Habermas’s conception of the public sphere and the discursive spaces which inhabit it can be seen to provide a further rationale for treating the text as a critical object, which complements the very similar text/object perspectives of Derrida and Adorno.

With regard to inclusion, Habermas's public sphere also seems to idealise the potential for access to public debate. Similarly, we may say that a university classroom that is based upon a principle of inclusivity is also by its nature an idealisation because not everyone has the opportunity go to university. They may not achieve the entry qualifications for example or, as is increasingly the case in the UK, they may find that they and their families cannot countenance the considerable financial indebtedness which this now incurs. Once at university however any student can, within the constraints of whatever programme they are following, enter more or less any class that they want. To this extent the criterion of inclusivity to which Habermas refers also appears to be met. If we apply the main points of Habermas's conception of the public sphere in *STPS* to a theorisation of critical discussion in the TACO classroom, the following 'conditions of discussion' may be suggested:

TACO conditions of discussion: a public sphere approach

1. Discussants are bound by institutional norms of constraint; these include a disregard for social status between discussants, a respect for rights of participation, and the expectation of intersubjective communication;
2. A critical discussion involves the problematisation of areas that are not usually questioned;
3. A critical discussion illuminates some aspect of perceived reality from the perspective of different discussants; a critical discussion is a constellation of views;
4. The object of a critical discussion is a text;
5. A critical discussion is, in principle, open to anyone; a critical discussion is inclusive.

These conditions are intended to suggest theorised grounds for the possibility as well as the practice of critical discussion in the public space of the university classroom. Rather than prescriptions, they are intended more as guideline principles of discussion. With this in mind, these conditions may be understood as representing a recontextualisation of a discourse model of public space to the university classroom. This model can be developed further if the evolution of Habermas's theory of communicative action is also taken into account.

4.4.3 *The lifeworld and communicative action: reconstructing the public sphere*

In *STPS* Habermas's enthusiasm for an 18th century public sphere unencumbered by status differentials gives way to a rather pessimistic account of its decline (Calhoun, 1992). According to Habermas, the bourgeois public sphere declines because rational-critical debate is supplanted in the 19th century by 'a culture of consumption' in which 'the public sphere

assumes advertising functions' (*STPS*: 175). In these circumstances the critically debating public contracts and society is divided into 'minorities of specialists who put their reason to use publicly and the great mass whose receptiveness is public but uncritical' (*STPS*: 175). Habermas's diagnosis is at this point identical to that of Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse. Habermas shares their critique of the rise of instrumental reason as a systematising force in capitalist society which displaces rational-critical debate in favour of panels of experts dedicated to solving system problems. This also explains why 'the structural transformation' which Habermas writes about is not a progressive transformation but a regressive one. The public sphere is replaced 'by the pseudo-public or sham-private world of culture consumption' (*STPS*: 165). In the political realm there is a perceptible shift away from a critical holding to account towards negotiation: 'The process of the politically relevant exercise and equilibration of power now takes place directly between the private bureaucracies, special interest groups, parties, and public administration. The public as such is only included sporadically in this circle of power, and even then it is only brought in to contribute to its acclamation' (*STPS*: 176). For example, in elections, and in staged public debates and rallies.

A problematic feature of Habermas's description of the public sphere is that it seems overly caricatured and historically idealised. The participants in the coffee houses and *salons* described in *STPS* are represented as having been able to enter into truly rational critical debate with one another wholly unencumbered by status constraints. They do not appear entirely credible because of this. Habermas has also been criticised for exaggerating the extent of the collapse of the public sphere (Calhoun, 1992; Benhabib, 1992; Fraser, 1992). There were for example (and still are) many countervailing tendencies to the collapse of the public sphere which Habermas does not record, such as the expansion in public education, the development of mass literacy, the increase in working class leisure time, the mass movements of the 1960s, the growth of identity politics (Calhoun, 1992), and more recently the spread of pro-environmental and anti-globalisation protest movements around the world. These are criticisms which Habermas (1992) in part concedes. More significant, however, is that it is the pessimism of his conclusions in *STPS* which lead him eventually to a theory of communicative action (1984, 1987b, 1989c). Habermas's initial reaction in *STPS* and then in later works such as *Theory and Practice* (1974) and *Legitimation Crisis* (1976a) was to determine how it would be possible to reconstruct a critical discourse in the midst of the technocratic rise of instrumental reason. In *STPS* he argues for greater democratisation

within institutions: 'their inner structure must first be organised in accord with the principle of publicity ... to allow for unhampered communication and public rational-critical debate' (STPS: 209). Not satisfied with this solution, however, mainly because of what he sees as a continued tendency towards a discourse of the subject, he increasingly turns towards language and an investigation of the intersubjective grounds of communication.

An important concomitant development in the process of his thought at this time is the conceptual distinction he makes between a systems world and a lifeworld. The systems world is the world of technocratic consciousness and instrumental reason, of systemic solutions to systemic problems; the lifeworld is the world of personal relationships and communicative action. For Habermas, the Frankfurt School, himself included, had placed too much emphasis on the instrumental rationalisation of society to the extent that any potential for emancipation appeared flattened out of existence. Their collective mistake, in his view, had been to generalise instrumental reason to the point where it became representative of reason as a whole (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). In this context instrumental reason, the reason of technocracy and bureaucracy, is individualised because it is realised in terms of the individual and collective acts of technocrats. In other words, it had become another example of the philosophy of consciousness, or discourse of the subject. According to Outhwaite (1996: 15): 'If rationalisation is seen as in this way, as the performance of an individual or collective *subject*, mastering itself as part of the extension of its power, there is no obvious way out of such traps.'

Habermas's conception of the lifeworld, which he brings to fruition in *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984, 1987b), represents a diagnostic correction to the overgeneralisation of instrumental reason. The lifeworld represents for Habermas our unspoken background knowledge of the world against which we enter into communication. In addition to being the cognitive horizon of meaning, it also represents the complex of everyday practices, customs and ideas of a society. It therefore has much in common with Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991). The lifeworld for Habermas is always oriented to communication and is 'the correlate of processes of reaching understanding' (Habermas, 1984: 70). In this sense it may also be said to represent an allegorical reconstruction of the public sphere, in which the processes of reaching an understanding are a reconstruction of rational-critical debate as well as being processes of communicative action. It is through these processes that the lifeworld is symbolically produced and reproduced in a

manner reminiscent of Foucault's discursive formations in the sense that it is communication realised as a type of discursive practice which is responsible for this (cf. Chapter Two).

The dialectical bond of the lifeworld and communicative action are counterposed by Habermas to the systems world. This enables him to realise 'a two-tiered concept of society as lifeworld and as system' (Habermas, 1992: 444). Although they are counterposed to one another, the lifeworld and the systems world are not mutually exclusive. What passed for the rise of instrumental reason and the eclipse of the public sphere in *STPS* is now conceived as a creeping colonisation of the lifeworld by the systems world in which the task of a *critical publicity* is 'to erect a democratic dam against the colonialising encroachment of system imperatives on areas of the lifeworld' (ibid: 444). Habermas discusses this in terms of the 'rediscovery' of the political public sphere, or 'civil society', which is 'constituted by voluntary unions outside the realm of the state and the economy' (ibid: 454). It is in this public sphere that 'there can come into being a *discursive formation of opinion and will* on the part of a public composed of the citizens of a state' (ibid: 446; emphasis added). According to Habermas, this public sphere includes 'churches, cultural associations, academies, independent media, debating societies, groups of concerned citizens, grass-roots petitioning drives, occupational associations, political parties, labour unions, and "alternative institutions"' (ibid: 446). From these illustrative indications it is clear that Habermas remains committed to the idea of a reconstruction of the public sphere and the maintenance of discursive public spaces as part of the lifeworld. Although it is not included in his list, in this thesis the classroom is conceived as one such space, and by examining communicative action more closely we can see how a discussion over the text might be proceduralised within it.

The principal sources for a perspective of communicative action recontextualised as a discursive response to the text are *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1976b), the first volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984), and *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (1989c). Habermas's conception of communicative action is encapsulated in the idea of 'a universal pragmatics' whose task is 'to identify and reconstruct universal conditions of possible understanding' (Habermas, 1996: 118). Having considered the possibilities for a reconstruction of the public sphere through institutional democratisation (Calhoun, 1992), Habermas turns to the general presuppositions of communication, or *validity claims*, which in his view are universally present in speech, and which Grice (1975) in another context labelled 'maxims of cooperation'. Habermas articulates these

presuppositions in a manner which is similar to Grice, but less elaborate. For Habermas, a communicating actor who is oriented to understanding must raise at least three validity claims with an utterance, namely:

1. That the statement is true (or that the existential presuppositions of the propositional content mentioned are in fact satisfied);
 2. That the speech act is right with respect to the existing normative context (or that the normative context it is supposed to satisfy is itself legitimate); and
 3. That the manifest intention of the speaker is meant as it is expressed.
- (Habermas, 1984: 99)

These claims suggest for Habermas the following universal principles of understanding:

- comprehensibility (that the speaker is intelligible)
- truth (that the speaker tells the truth)
- truthfulness (that the speaker intends to tell the truth)
- correctness (that against a recognised normative background the utterance chosen by the speaker is right and appropriate to the context)

The model of communicative action which is presupposed by these principles is idealised. It is idealised because Habermas wishes to elaborate from these principles normative grounds for the possibility of universal consensus. That is, he wishes to use the cooperative norms of intersubjective communication as the basis for a universal moral theory or discourse ethics; it is therefore a conception of the grounds of universal morality in the abstract. Although necessarily an idealisation, the process of reaching an understanding requires that participants in communication orient themselves towards the possibility of agreement. The theory of communicative action is therefore not only a theory of the possibility of reaching understanding, but also a theory of reaching that understanding *through a process of discussion*. According to this perspective, if the universal principles of understanding are taken as the normative basis of communication, all validity claims raised in discussion, or in argument, may be measured for their truth and for their moral rightfulness against that normative base. In this way moral judgements can be made and a universally legitimate moral consensus can in principle be reached according to the accepted strength of the better argument. The key issue for the purposes of this discussion is that the importance of Habermas's discourse ethics is not dependent upon accepting or rejecting this moral standpoint; this is almost entirely incidental. The importance of Habermas's discourse ethics

is its representation of *the process of discussion* which leads to understanding, and not the possibility of reaching understanding itself, universal or otherwise. As Habermas himself has made clear on more than one occasion, 'stability and absence of ambiguity are rather the exception in the communicative practice of everyday life' (Habermas, 1984: 100). If the theory of communicative action is read through the lens of an orientation to discussion, rather than according to an orientation to agreement, and this is done in conjunction with what he has said about rational public discourse and the reconstruction of the public sphere, Habermas's thought becomes an extremely valuable resource for theorising the process of classroom discussion which might proceed from a critical reading. This is because his thought is, above all, about the elaboration of a proceduralist theory of communication:

The principle of discourse ethics (D) makes reference to a *procedure*: ... Practical discourse. Practical discourse ... is a procedure for testing the validity of norms that are being proposed and hypothetically considered for adoption. That means that practical discourses depend on content brought to them from outside. (Habermas, 1996: 187; emphasis in original)

That is, from the lifeworld. In a classroom context, what Habermas refers to as a practical discourse is in effect a discussion between two or more class members regarding the interpretations which they have each arrived at as a result of a critical reading. These class members, or 'discussants', are exchanging information about a common object of discussion, a text, which they have all read and critically analysed according to the four-stage procedure described earlier in this chapter. In this interpretative process they will have attempted to test the validity of norms that adhere to the way the text seems to want to be read, its preferred reading. Taking this further we may also say that their interpretations are derived from 'content brought to them from outside' in the sense that the text has arrived in the classroom from another lifeworld context, for example that of a newspaper or magazine, and also in the sense of the students' background knowledge of the world; without which, according to Habermas, their interpretations would not be possible: 'It would be utterly pointless to engage in a practical discourse without the horizon provided by the lifeworld' (Habermas, 1996: 187). The notion of a 'practical discourse' is also according to Benhabib (1992: 87) the defining feature of a public sphere: 'The public sphere comes into existence wherever and whenever all affected by general social and political norms of action engage in a practical discourse, evaluating their validity.' That this evaluation process is in this case centred on a text does not in my view detract from the relevance this has for classroom procedures of discussion. Like all public spheres, the classroom is an 'arena of discursive relations'

(Fraser, 1992: 110-11), but of discursive relations between learners who also happen to be citizens.

In *The Theory of Communicative Action* there are many points where a proceduralist attitude to discussion is apparent. Habermas informs us that the concept of communicative action assumes interaction between at least two subjects who are able to establish interpersonal relations and that central to this task is the concept of interpretation: ‘The central concept of *interpretation* refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situation which admit of consensus’ (Habermas, 1984: 86; emphasis in original). Similarly, in a discussion relating to the interpretation of a text, classroom discussants are ‘negotiating’ their impressions of (i) the preferred reading of the text and (ii) the extent to which the descriptive, representative, and social dimensions of the text are congruent with that initial reading. It may help to recall that in Derrida’s approach critical reading is viewed as ‘a doubling commentary’. It is the first commentary in a critical reading which reproduces the preferred reading of the text, or ‘reading of minimal consensus’ (Derrida, 1988: 146). In the four-stage framework for treating the text as a critical object this is the first descriptive stage of interpretation:

- ***Descriptive interpretation:*** the frame of the text; the visual organisation of the text; the topic, the preferred reading and the reading position.

The proceduralist theme is frequently taken up by Habermas particularly in Chapters One and Three of the first volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984). In addition to numerous references of the kind already noted, I have been struck by one passage in particular which seems to sum up for me the proceduralist approach to classroom discussion which is described in this chapter. I have taken the liberty to cite it in full and have also added my own parenthetical gloss to it in order to illustrate why it seems an important procedural statement for the purposes of this study:

A speaker puts forward a criticisable claim in relating with his utterance to at least one “world” [text]; he thereby uses the fact that this relation between actor [reader] and world [text] is in principle open to objective appraisal in order to call upon his opposite number [partner] to take a rationally [textually] motivated position. The concept of communicative action presupposes language as the medium for a kind of reaching of understanding, in the course of which participants [readers], through relating to a world [text], reciprocally raise validity claims [interpretations] that can be accepted or contested. (Habermas, 1984: 99)

The process of reaching understanding in a public sphere represents the process by which there is ‘a discursive formation of public opinion and will on the part of a public composed of the citizens of a state’ (Habermas, 1992: 446). He gives this the term ‘discursive will formation’ (Habermas, 1989b, 1992). Habermas’s concept of discursive will formation can be adapted to a discussion of the text insofar as classroom discussants attempt to reach some collective understanding of a text, with the difference that they may or *may not* reach an agreement regarding their interpretations. I call this process of collective understanding in a classroom context *discursive knowledge formation*. This is my own term. **Discursive knowledge formation** is the pedagogic outcome of a discursive exchange about a text, in which other discussants’ observations contribute to a collective ‘constellatory’ impression of the text.

This implies that there is a difference between a collective understanding and one oriented to consensus. An understanding which is oriented consensus is not a *collective* understanding but a *uniform* understanding in which all participants to the discussion are in full agreement. As this type of agreement is, as Habermas has noted, quite rare in everyday communication we may understand a collective understanding, in most circumstances, as containing elements of the consensual, or relatively consensual, as well as the non-consensual. More important in the context of a discussion which accompanies a critical reading is the fact of an exchange of views regarding a text, and that class members can be observed to have oriented themselves to the initial conditions of discussion which I believe may be said to apply to pedagogic contexts of textual analysis: that there is *in principle* equality of access to discussion, that status distinctions economic, political, racial, etc., *are not construed* as obstacles to class members talking to one another, and that students are oriented to the expectation of pair and group work when in class.

These are primarily issues of classroom management, but they are also issues of power. All classrooms are sites of power and power relations, particularly between teachers and their students, but also in a classroom’s existence within the structural and discursive matrices of a large educational institution such as a university. Teachers must plan lessons and apply some systemic organisation to their classroom and, in order to do so, they must exercise their power, and adopt certain roles or ‘subject positions’ when there (cf. Foucault, 1981b). In Habermas’s words: ‘The competent combination of specialised performances requires a delegation of the authority to direct, or of *power*, to persons who take on the tasks of

organisation' (Habermas, 1987b: 160; emphasis in original). The ubiquity of power relations should not be seen as necessarily problematic to critical educational practice, as for example Chouliaraki (1998) and Mellor and Patterson (2001) seem to argue. This is because the exercise of power and the attendant power relations which cause classroom participants to enter certain subject positions (e.g. as students and as teachers) are what make a classroom a classroom. The classroom is constructed as a classroom because of them. If this is a Foucauldian conception of power, and I think it is, then it can also be argued that it is to some extent a Habermasian one as well, because Foucault's 'networks of power' may, at least in this context, be said to correspond in part to what Habermas conceives of as the 'systems world'.

Although the systems world is the world of technocratic consciousness, Habermas represents the systems world as existing in a symbiotic, if one-sidedly symbiotic, relationship with the lifeworld. The systems world might imagine itself existing without the lifeworld, but the lifeworld must not be allowed to achieve the systemic effacement of the systems world, even if that seems appealing, because without a systems world we would, according to Habermas, exist in chaos, with profoundly negative consequences for social organisation: 'systemic mechanisms need to be anchored in the lifeworld: they have to be institutionalised' (Habermas, 1987b: 154). For example, the existence of systems world aspects in the lifeworld, such as the rule of law and conceptions of justice and human rights are, according to Habermas, essential as well as welcome contributions to social organisation. Equally, a society where all decisions had to be universally agreed before they could be implemented would quickly cease functioning if some system of plebiscitory democratic representation were not introduced (Calhoun, 1992). The argument that some kind of system is necessary in order for us to be able to do anything may also be applied to the classroom context, where there must be some organisational point from which we can begin our discussion, i.e. a *system* of pedagogic organisation, otherwise we would not have a classroom, and discursive knowledge formation, or *learning*, could not occur. There thus seems to be a possible coincidence between Foucault and Habermas here because both of them see systemic power as a constraint which allows us to act. Foucault, because power is subjectifying; it establishes the subject positions according to which individuals are able to participate in discursive practices:

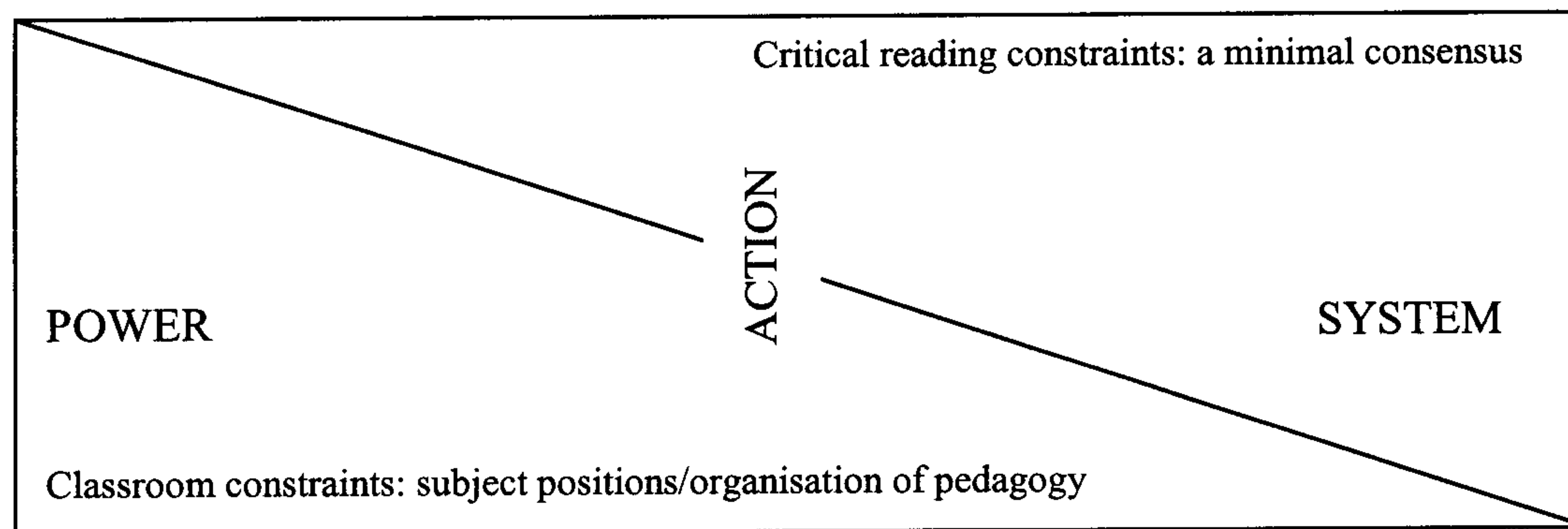
Ritual defines the qualification which must be possessed by individuals who speak (and who must occupy such-and-such a position and formulate such-and-such a type of statement, in the play of a dialogue, of interrogation or recitation); it defines the gestures, behaviour, circumstances, and the whole set of signs which must accompany discourse; finally, it fixes the supposed or imposed efficacy of the words, their effect on those to whom they are addressed, and the limits of their constraining value. (Foucault, 1981a: 62)

... and Habermas, because the systems world confers necessary organisational mechanisms on the lifeworld, which are needed if the lifeworld is to be able to function:

Every new leading mechanism of system differentiation must ... be anchored in the lifeworld; it must be *institutionalised* there via family status, the authority of office or bourgeois private law. In the final analysis, social formations are distinguished by the institutional cores that define society's "base," in the Marxian sense ... The institutionalisation of ... system differentiation requires reconstruction in the core institutional domain of the moral-legal regulation of conflicts ... in such a way that the basis of communicative action – and with it the social integration of the lifeworld – does not fall apart. (Habermas, 1987b: 173; emphasis in original)

We may also see the analogous logic of the systems world and the lifeworld at work in the methodology of deconstruction, where the systems world is in Derrida's hands a minimal consensus which imposes some minimum order on the meaning of the text, and the lifeworld the opening orbit of deconstruction and the orientation to the 'Other' which prevents the text from becoming a closed and unquestioned system of meaning relations. Nevertheless, as with the condition of classroom discussion, critique must start somewhere, and for Derrida this somewhere is the nominal system of meaning which is the reading of minimal consensus. The reading of minimal consensus corresponds to what Derrida (1988, 1995) calls an 'ethic of discussion' in the reading of texts: e.g. that you must respect the text; that you cannot just say anything about a text, that there is a duty of care to the text. From this perspective it is possible to argue that in relation to Habermas's systems/lifeworld distinction the reading of minimal consensus in a procedure of critical reading is the corollary of a procedural system of pedagogic organisation (*Fig. 10*). They are the necessary minimal constraints by which critical action in an educational context is able to occur.

Fig. 10 Constraints on critical reading and discussion in TACO



The overlapping orientations of Habermas, Foucault, Adorno and Derrida to notions of *systemic power* and/or of *systems* are illustrated in the table below (Fig. 11). In addition to the systemic orientation which each of them has, I have also indicated (i) at what level these are primarily applicable (societal, institutional, or textual/objectual), (ii) what the key concepts are which may be associated with such an orientation, and (iii) how they seem to enable a procedural and *systemic* orientation to discussion in a TACO classroom.

Fig. 11 Orientations of power and systems relations in critical reading and discussion

	Orientation to systemic power and/or systems relations	Key concepts	Orientation to discussion
Habermas	systems world (societal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technocratic consciousness • instrumental reason • organisational systems • public sphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conditions of discussion • absence of status differentials • rights of participation • intersubjective communication • a practical discourse
Foucault	systemic networks of power (institutional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discursive formations • orders of discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contextual and discursive constraints • subject positions
Adorno	self-conception of the object; a system of preferred meaning (objectual/ textual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appearance • immanence • a constellations perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immanent critique • constellations
Derrida	a system of minimal consensus (textual/ objectual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an indispensable guardrail • the reading of minimal consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double reading • interpretation • deconstruction • an ethic of discussion

4.4.4 The consensual/non-consensual public sphere: Habermas and Derrida

Although Derrida and Habermas come from different philosophical traditions, a number of writers have pointed to certain coincidences of thought and purpose between them (e.g. Best and Kellner, 1991; Norris, 1992; Critchley, 1999b; Borradori, 2003). If ethics is interpreted as a concern for openness, justice, truth, and responsibility, and deconstruction as a sustained and critical questioning of claims to truth, there does seem to be an ‘ethical Derrida’ as well as a ‘deconstructing Habermas’ to be found in and between the lines of their work. These are demonstrably shared concerns for both thinkers. Moreover, Derrida’s ethic of discussion may be seen to reinforce and expand on Habermas’s conditions of discussion in the public sphere. In the following passage, it is Derrida who is speaking:

The task is always *in principle* to render an account and to *render reason*. In both cases one should mark – in the *public* space and as rationally as possible – one’s respect for the principle of reason. This should be done in principle ... through research, questioning, inquiry that seeks the “true,” analysis, presentation of what “is” or exposition of the “facts,” historical narrative, discussion, evaluation, interpretation, and putting all these propositions together thanks to what is called language, communication, information, pedagogy, and so forth. I insist on these two motifs, *the public space* and *the principle of reason*, as I have often done. (Derrida, 1995: 427; emphasis in original)

Habermas and Derrida, at least in this context, do not seem so far apart as they are sometimes presented. If they are closer than they are often given credit for, then perhaps the main difference between them is their respective attitudes to political/ethical/textual openness. Although both are oriented to a politics and an ethics of openness, Derrida would hope that it remains just that, an openness without closure, an indefinite opening to ‘the Other’, whereas Habermas would prefer a much more grounded understanding of openness according to which the critical intersubjective adjudication of a just, rational and universally legitimating society would become possible. In other words, where Habermas’s public sphere is oriented to universal consensus, Derrida’s is oriented to an interminable questioning and ‘the democracy to come’ (Derrida, 2003: 118). In this light, as Norris (1992) has noted, the main difference between them may be not so much one of irreconcilability as one of philosophical/rhetorical style and emphasis.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to develop a procedural basis for classroom-based CDA which is derived from critical social theory. The exegetic and discursive elements of this procedure are a combination of modernist and poststructuralist philosophical perspectives. The development of this procedure has brought into dialogue some diverse philosophical positions, but ones which also seem to have complementary possibilities. These include between Habermas and Derrida (on the public sphere), between Derrida and Adorno (on exegesis), and between Habermas and Foucault (on power). This discussion has also shown that Adorno, Derrida and Habermas each have theoretical perspectives which are opposed to closure. Adorno's perspective is one which resists the closure of the self-identity of the object, Derrida's is one which resists the closure of the self-certainty of the text, and Habermas's is one which resists the closure of discursive spaces in the lifeworld. In this chapter I have sought to demonstrate how bringing these perspectives together makes it possible to construct a procedural perspective towards the text which is not reliant on a procedural framework derived from SFL. This permits a theoretical reconceptualisation of CDA in which its perceptions of discourse, of society, *and* of the text, are theorised from the perspective of critical social theory. The effect of this is to move CDA onto an alternative *critical* ground, on the one hand because SFL from being the organising principle for a procedure of critical reading becomes instead a linguistic resource, and on the other, because CDA's relation to criticality has been redefined. In the light of the above discussion, the following CRITICAL mnemonic is proposed as a collective summary of the points which have been made. It also serves an educational checklist of what this approach entails.

- C** is for critical. Be critical; resist closure
- R** is for respect. Respect how the text seems to want to be read
- I** is for interpretation. Interpret the text from within
- T** is for teaching. Teach your interpretation to others
- I** is for investigation. Investigate the interpretations of others
- C** is for cooperation and communication. Cooperate in order to communicate
- A** is for analysis. Analyse the construction of knowledge
- L** is for learning. Learn from the knowledge of others

Chapter Five

From CDA to the Text as a Critical Object

5.1 Chapter synopsis

In Chapter Four a theorisation of procedure from the perspective of critical social theory was introduced. In this chapter (and in Chapter Six) the main aim is to address my second research question of what this approach might look like by providing a fuller explanation of the TACO framework. The chapter begins by discussing two representative models of textual analysis in the traditions of CDA and CLA, Norman Fairclough's and Catherine Wallace's, in order to illustrate what I feel their principal shortcomings are for educational contexts of use. The main part of this discussion is centred on Fairclough's procedural framework because his perspective has been, and continues to be, the predominant model of analysis in CDA. This leads into a description of the TACO framework and its relationship to the discourse perspectives outlined in Chapter Two. The second half of the chapter is a step-by-step commentary on each stage which includes a justification of relevant terms and concepts.

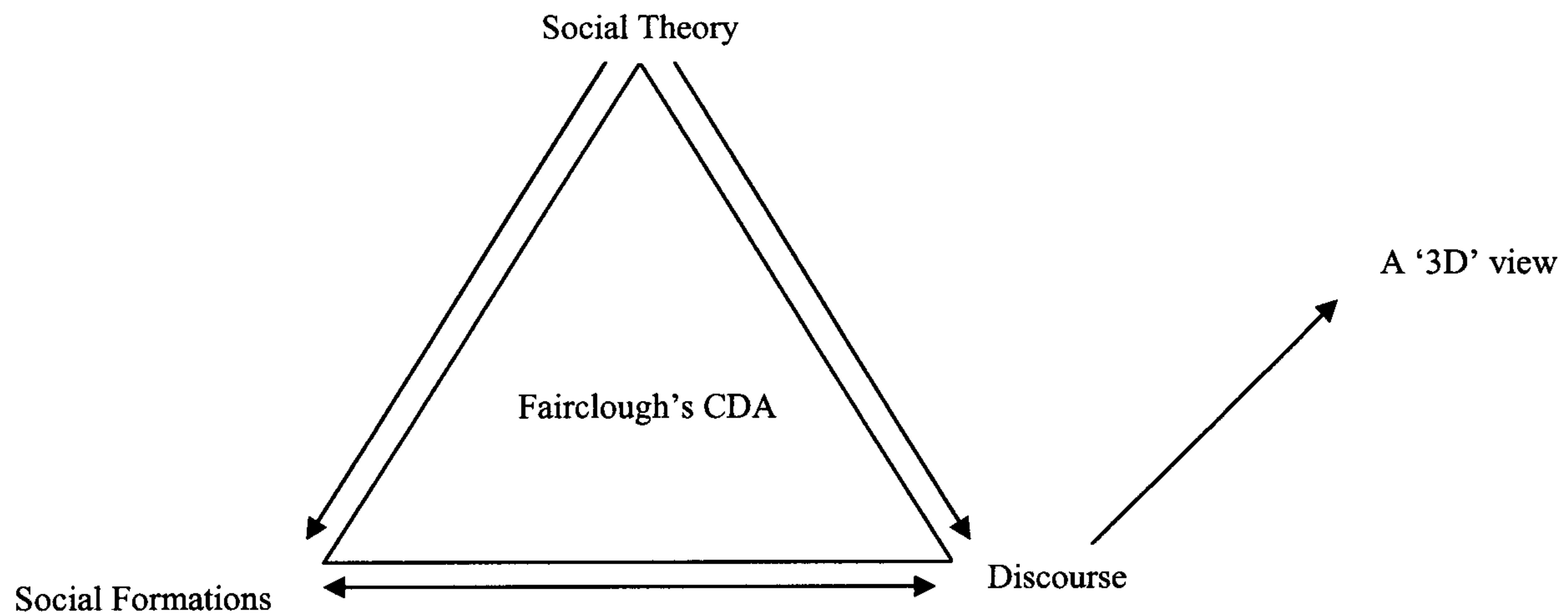
5.2. Models of textual analysis: reading frameworks in CDA and CLA

5.2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis: Fairclough's procedural framework

In this first section Fairclough's procedural framework for CDA is introduced and discussed (Fairclough, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 2001).⁶ This will include a discussion of the three-dimensional model of discourse on which his framework is based. Fairclough's model of CDA is significant to this study because in his work he has demonstrated more clearly and more systematically than most how critical social theory can inform a theory of discourse and of discourse analysis. He has also made a major contribution to understandings of how language as discourse is dialectically implicated in social processes and social practices, and in the construction of the 'orders of discourse' of social formations. Like the approach of this study, and therefore unlike most others approaches, Fairclough's is a 'tripartite' model of CDA: it combines critical social theory with the study of social formations and with discourse. This is illustrated in *Fig. 1*.

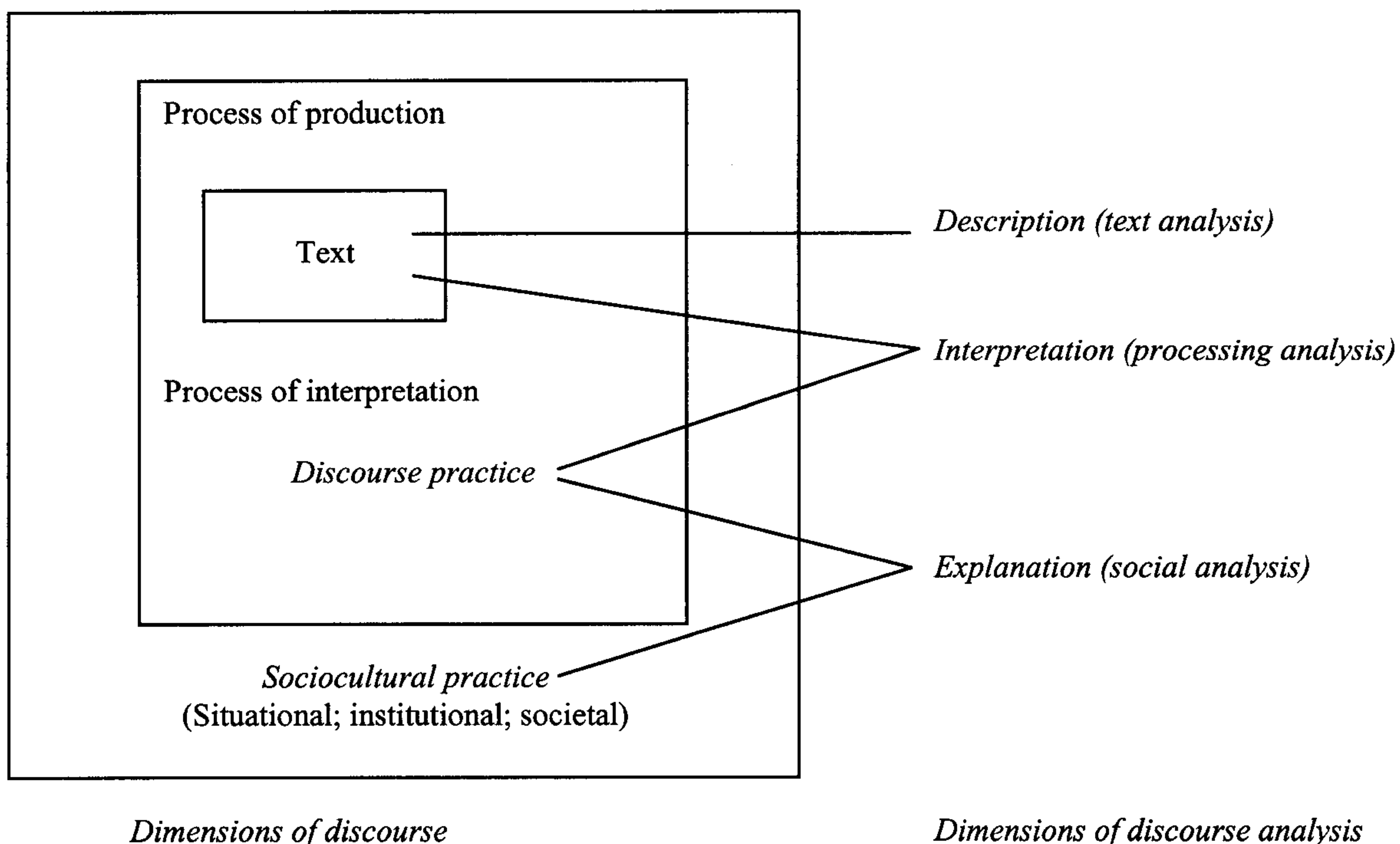
⁶ The procedural stages which are described here are drawn largely from the pages of *Language and Power* (1989, 2001), but also incorporate elements from across the range of Fairclough's work in which the same procedural framework is evident (e.g. Fairclough 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 1995c). References to page numbers in *Language and Power* are to the first edition (1989). All quoted references to this edition are extant in the 2001 edition.

Fig. 1 Fairclough's CDA: a tripartite model



Fairclough's procedural approach to CDA is also based on a tripartite model. In this case a three-dimensional view of discourse (*Fig. 2*). In this model Fairclough represents discourse as operating at three levels simultaneously: (i) as text (spoken or written), (ii) as discourse practice (processes of text production and text interpretation), and (iii) as sociocultural practice (immediate context, institutional context, societal context).

Fig. 2 Fairclough's three-dimensional view of discourse



(From Fairclough, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 2001)

These discourse dimensions for Fairclough are all dialectically interlinked. It is this interlinking which in his view makes language a social practice: 'My view is that there is not an external relationship 'between' language and society, but an internal and dialectical relationship. Language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena *are* social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena *are*, in part, linguistic phenomena' (Fairclough, 1989: 23). The three-dimensional conception of discourse corresponds to a three-dimensional method of discourse analysis. These stages constitute Fairclough's procedure for doing CDA:

- **Description** of the formal linguistic properties of texts.
- **Interpretation** of the relationship between (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text. The text is a product of a process of production (by a text-producer), and a resource in the process of interpretation (by a text-interpreter). It is an *interaction* between people.
- **Explanation** of the relationship between the discursive processes and social processes. The text is a part of a piece of *social action*. It is part of a social context. It is part of a sociocultural practice.

(Based on Fairclough, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 2001)

The three-dimensional view of discourse and of discourse analysis which Fairclough presents is of some sophistication. One of its main strengths is the way that the each of the dimensions of discourse seems to correspond to each of the dimensions of discourse analysis. Another is that what results is procedural in that there appears to be three definite stages for the discourse analyst, or critical reader, to follow. While these are advantages, there are a number of problems which I have found with the model, and more specifically with the procedure which Fairclough derives from it.

The first issue is that there is a lack of consistency in the terms that he uses for describing his model. Fairclough has given varying representations of it (e.g. Fairclough, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 2001), and terms which appear to signify similar ideas and concepts in one are differently labelled in others, so that 'discursive processes' in one text are described as 'interactions' in another, 'social processes' are described as 'social action', and 'social context' is described as 'sociocultural practice'. This makes the description of Fairclough's model more complex than is necessary. A second issue relates to the transparency with

which Fairclough describes the model. This is not always as explicit as it could be. For example:

The approach I have adopted is based on a three-dimensional conception of discourse, and correspondingly, a three-dimensional conception of discourse analysis ... A special feature of the approach is that the link between sociocultural practice and text is mediated by discourse practice; how a text is produced or interpreted, in the sense of what discursive practices and conventions are drawn from what order(s) of discourse and how they are articulated together, depends upon the nature of the sociocultural practice which the discourse is a part of (including the relationship to existing hegemonies); the nature of the discourse practice of text production shapes the text, and leaves 'traces' in the surface features of the text; and the nature of discourse practice of text interpretation determines how the surface features of a text will be interpreted. (Fairclough, 1995: 97)

While there is a definite organisational logic to Fairclough's approach there is a risk of becoming overwhelmed by the detail at the expense of a more transparent orientation to practice. My understanding of what Fairclough is saying here is that the text is part of a social context, and that it is 'a product' in the sense that a person or group of persons has produced it. The text is also something which is to be interpreted by others. He then suggests that how the text will be produced and how it will be interpreted will be determined by this wider social context. This context includes 'orders of discourse' (cf. Foucault's discursive formations) and 'hegemonies', i.e. socially dominant ideas and conventions. Together these will determine the nature of the text that is produced. By being determined in this way the text will contain certain characteristic features or 'traces' which will act as 'cues' for how the text is supposed to be received and interpreted. In other words, by being part of a recognisable social context, and therefore by containing 'traces' of this context in its surface features, the text more or less 'tells' the reader how it should be read. This conception therefore corresponds to what I have referred to as the 'preferred reading'. It also bears a relation to what I have described as the genre features of the text. These genre features are the 'traces' and 'cues' to which Fairclough refers. These identify the text as a culturally recognisable 'text type' (see Chapter Two: 2.3.3).

The lack of transparency which characterises Fairclough's description of his model also extends to the three stages of discourse analysis (description, interpretation and explanation). There are four points which can be made in this context. These are:

1. Fairclough's description stage is both a *description* of the linguistic features of the text as well as an *interpretation* of them. Accepting that how one describes is also an interpretative act, the conflation of these practices within Fairclough's procedure puts into question how his interpretation stage differs from the description stage which precedes it.
2. The procedure is terminologically and conceptually complex involving an elaborate metalanguage.
3. Related to the first point, Fairclough's three stages seem insufficiently integrated as a procedure which is centred on the text because in the later stages there seems to be more concern for how texts are interpreted *in general*, and how they may be explained *in general*, than for the text itself.
4. There is some ambivalence in relation to who is doing the interpreting in Fairclough's procedure, i.e. whether it is general readers of texts or whether it is critical discourse analysts like himself. Fairclough suggests that it is both.

I will take each of these points in turn.

With regard to the first point, Fairclough's description stage includes a detailed list of linguistic features which he feels are significant to the critical analysis of texts. Fairclough's description stage is centred on ten questions. These are shown in *Fig. 3*:

Fig. 3 The description stage of Fairclough's procedural framework (1989, 2001)

A. Vocabulary

1. What experiential values do words have?
 - What classification schemes are drawn on?
 - Are there words which are ideologically contested?
 - Is there *rewording* or *overwording*?
 - What ideologically significant meaning relations (*synonymy*, *hyponymy*, *antonymy*?) are there between words?
2. What *relational* values do words have?
 - Are there any euphemistic impressions?
 - Are there markedly formal or informal words?
3. What *expressive* values do words have?
4. What metaphors are used?

B. Grammar

5. What experiential values do grammatical features have?
 - What types of *process* and *participant* predominate?
 - Is agency unclear?
 - Are processes what they seem?
 - Are *nominalisations* used?
 - Are sentences active or passive?
 - Are sentences positive or negative?
6. What relational values do grammatical features have?
 - What *modes* (*declarative*, *grammatical question*, *imperative*) are used?
 - Are there important features of *relational modality*?
 - Are the pronouns *we* and *you* used, and if so, how?
7. What expressive values do grammatical features have?
 - Are there important features of *expressive modality*?
8. How are (simple) sentences linked together?
 - What logical connectors are used?
 - Are complex sentences characterised by *coordination* or *subordination*?
 - What means are used for referring outside and inside the text?

C. Textual structures

9. What interactional conventions are used?
 - Are there ways in which one participant controls the contributions (turns) of others?
 - What larger-scale structures does the text have?

The role of the above questions in Fairclough's framework, in addition to being a means of describing features which are present in texts, is also primarily one of interpretation of them. Interpretation here is understood as the examination of a feature's significance for the text that is being analysed. Fairclough also establishes an explicit connection between description and interpretation but the point he makes is somewhat different in that it relates to the choices which the analyst must make in deciding what should be described. As he puts it:

... it should be said that description is ultimately just as dependent on the analyst's 'interpretation' ... What one 'sees' in a text, what one regards as worth describing, and what one chooses to emphasise in a description, are all dependent on how one sees a text. There is a positivist tendency to regard language texts as 'objects' whose formal properties can be mechanically described without interpretation. But try as they may, analysts cannot help engaging with human products in a human, and therefore interpretative way. (Fairclough, 1989: 27)

Strictly speaking there are therefore two kinds of interpretation occurring in Fairclough's description stage. Interpretation of the significance of the linguistic (and rhetorical) features of the text, and interpretation as a function of human choice and selection. Fairclough is

addressing the second point only; he does not specifically address the first and therefore underplays the extent to which his description stage is much more actively interpretative of the significance of features than he suggests. It is interpretative in this sense because Fairclough devotes a whole chapter of *Language and Power* to discussing, under the category of the description stage, the significance of the linguistic and rhetorical features which might occur in a text. It is also interpretative because of the level of detail which is immanent to the description stage.

Fairclough's procedure does not encourage the analyst to develop an overall perception of the text prior to moving to a more detailed analysis of it. His is a 'bottom-up' approach. Rather than first getting an overall view to the text 'from the top', for example as a textual event having certain general organisational characteristics (e.g. layout features), as a product designed for a certain type of audience (e.g. ideal reader), or as an instance of discourse with a particular orientation and meaning (e.g. preferred reading), Fairclough's procedure requires us to start at the bottom with the detailed specifics of the text. For the reason that Fairclough does not incorporate this type of top-down orientation to the text his procedure may be said to bypass the first reading or commentary of a Derridean model of procedure and to begin at the second more detailed one. It is therefore not a 'doubling commentary' in the sense which was described in Chapter Four. This also has the consequence that the 'sub-categories' of the description stage in Fairclough's procedure are in the representative interpretation stage in TACO, although in different form, as much of the metalanguage of Fairclough's procedure has either been adapted or removed. Another way of envisaging this is to say that the representative interpretation stage in the TACO framework corresponds to the description stage in Fairclough's. This is represented in *Fig. 4*.

Fig. 4 Fairclough's CDA and TACO: description and interpretation

Fairclough's CDA	TACO
	<i>Descriptive Interpretation:</i> the frame of the text, the visual organisation of the text, the topic, the reading position, the preferred reading, and the ideal reader.
Description: of the formal linguistic properties of texts	<i>Representative interpretation:</i> description and interpretation of the immanent features of the text - image, grammar, vocabulary and genre.

It is because description is an interpretation of ‘how one sees a text’ that in my own framework the first stage is called the ‘descriptive *interpretation*’ rather than simply a description, and it is also because I see interpretation of the detail of the text as subsequent to this preliminary description that it constitutes the second stage in my approach, rather than being part of the first.

The second issue which has been identified as problematic for Fairclough’s procedure is its terminological and conceptual complexity. This relates specifically to the metalinguistic descriptors which Fairclough adopts for discussing lexical and grammatical features at the description stage: i.e. the experiential, relational, and expressive *values* of texts (see Fig. 3 above). Fairclough has adapted these terms from Halliday (1978, 1994) who refers to ideational and interpersonal *functions* of texts (cf. 4.2.1). In *Language and Power* (1989, 2001: 12) Fairclough uses ‘experiential value’ to refer to Halliday’s ideational function:⁷

A formal feature with experiential value is a trace of and a cue to the way in which the text producer’s experience of the natural or social world is represented ... [It] is to do with *contents* and knowledge and beliefs. (Emphasis in original)

He also divides Halliday’s interpersonal function into two, a relational value and an expressive value:

A formal feature with relational value is a trace of and a cue to the social relationships which are enacted via the text in the discourse. Relational value is (transparently!) to do with *relations* and social relationships. And, finally, a formal feature with expressive value is a trace and a cue to the producer’s evaluation (in the widest sense) of the bit of reality that it relates to. Expressive value is to do with *subjects* and social identities ... *Let me emphasise that any given formal feature may simultaneously have two or three of these values.* (Fairclough, 1989: 112; parentheses in the original; my emphasis).

To these Fairclough adds a fourth ‘connective’ value. This corresponds to Halliday’s textual function described above. According to Fairclough connective values have:

⁷ In Hallidayan grammar the experiential function is, with a ‘logical function’, a sub-category of the ideational function (see Halliday, 1994: 179).

... a partially internal character compared with the others, in that it is a matter of the values formal features have in connecting together parts of texts. But it is also to do with the relationship between texts and contexts: some formal features point outside the text to its situational context, or to its 'intertextual' context, i.e. to previous texts which are related to it. (Fairclough, 1989: 129-30)

In other words, these are the endophoric and exophoric relationships of the systemic-functional cohesive system (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

I have italicised the last line of the preceding excerpt from *Language and Power* in order to highlight the complicating effect which these values have on the description stage and therefore on Fairclough's procedure more generally. It means that for every lexical and grammatical feature identified in a text there are two or more values – experiential, relational, expressive, connective – to consider. The cumulative effect of these considerations is to make the description stage a complex and specialist undertaking as there are a number of possible experiential, relational, expressive, and connective combinations which will have to be taken into account. The other issue is that it is not that straightforward to determine for any textual feature what the relevant value might be; i.e. when is it experiential and relational and not experiential and expressive, or experiential, expressive and connective? Owing to the fact that this is not always easy to determine, there is a risk with Fairclough's procedure of becoming bogged down in the terminology at the expense of an appreciation of the text, and in the temporal and interactional context of a classroom this can be a significant drawback. The risk is that students will become so preoccupied with the metalinguistic description that they lose sight of what the text is saying, how the text is saying it, and what their view of this is.

This returns me to the issue of procedure and to the third point which was raised above regarding the procedural integration of Fairclough's three stages. If students and non-specialists are to do Critical Discourse Analysis, students need procedures with which they can engage, procedures which are not too lengthy, not overly complex, and which are clearly 'procedural' in that they give staged instructions and suggestions regarding how, in a critical reading, a text might be approached and what it might be useful to record. Fairclough's three stages seem insufficiently integrated and therefore also insufficiently procedural in these respects, and one of the main reasons for this is that apart from the description stage his procedure does not seem centrally focused on the text. The second and third stages of his

procedure, rather than being primarily concerned with the interpretation and explanation of the text are centred on a description and discussion of *how* texts are interpreted and *how* they may be explained. In his own words:

When we turn to the stages of interpretation and explanation, analysis cannot be seen in terms of applying a procedure to an 'object' ... What one is analysing is much less determinate. In the case of interpretation, it is the cognitive processes of participants, and in the case of explanation, it is relationships between transitory social events. In both cases the analyst is in the position of offering interpretations of complex and invisible relationships. (Fairclough, 1989: 27)

Fairclough therefore on his own account distances his procedure from what ought to be its principal object of analysis, the text, and this is a significant drawback for an educational application of his procedure to the classroom analysis and discussion of texts.

This leads me to the fourth and final issue which is that, as a consequence of this, it is not entirely evident *who* is doing the interpreting in Fairclough's procedure, i.e. whether it is the interpretation of general readers which is at issue, or whether it is the interpretations of critical discourse analysts like himself. Fairclough suggests that it is both:

I use the term *interpretation* both as the name of a stage in a procedure, and for the interpretation of texts by discourse participants. *I do so to stress the essential similarity between what the analyst does and what participants do* ... The stage of interpretation is concerned with participants' processes of text production as well as text interpretation. (Fairclough, 1989: 141; my emphasis)

Fairclough thus seems to conflate interpretation of discourse participants in general with the deliberate interpretative practice of the analyst. Fairclough presents the interpretation stage principally as an account of theoretical concepts in his approach: situational context and discourse; intertextual context and presupposition; frames, scripts and schemata; topic and point (Fairclough, 1989: 141-62). This also seems counter-procedural in relation to the approach, because rather than suggesting what the analyst might *do* to interpret the text, Fairclough seems more concerned with the resources which people call upon in order to be able to interpret, which is rather different. Moreover, as Fairclough acknowledges: 'The picture of interpretation which emerges ... is a rather complex one' (ibid: 145).

The final stage of Fairclough's procedure is the explanation stage. According to Fairclough:

The objective of the stage of explanation is to portray discourse as part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on these structures, sustaining them or changing them ... Given the orientation of this book, the social structures which are in focus are relations of power, and the social processes and practices which are in focus are processes and practices of social struggle. (Fairclough, 1989: 164)

The key issue here is the extent to which the concerns of this stage can be said to be formulated as a procedure for analysing texts. Like the interpretation stage, the explanation stage does not seem sufficiently focused on this. Rather than being analytically procedural it seems more concerned with 'processes' and 'practices', in this case the ideological processes and practices through which relations of power and domination are sustained, as well as with the processes and practices of social struggle. Taken together, these factors have the similar effect of distancing Fairclough's procedure from what ought to be its principal object of analysis, the text.

Taken as a whole Fairclough's procedure seems to be primarily one of social critique in relation to discourse processes and practices than one of textual exegesis. This is with the recognition that in my view, and in Fairclough's, the social and the textual cannot be separated from the other, but are closely intertwined. But in Fairclough's description of his procedure the emphasis seems to be the social rather than the more textual aspects of this relationship, particularly at the second and third stages. The consequence of this is that the text is put in a secondary relationship to the processes and practices of discourse and their relationship to social structures, and this serves to diminish the text somewhat. In my own procedure I have sought to keep fairly close to the text by making the text, and reference to the text, the anchor for each stage.

It was noted earlier that Fairclough's description stage corresponds to the second stage of the TACO framework, the stage of representative interpretation. Insofar as Fairclough's explanation stage makes links between discourse practices and wider social world this corresponds to the stage of social interpretation in my own framework. The stage of social interpretation in the TACO framework is concerned with describing the wider social

frameworks within which a text is located and understood. In Chapter Four these frameworks were referred to as lifeworld frames and lifeworld scripts (see 4.3.4). Fairclough (1989, 2001) refers to these as ‘Members Resources’. For Habermas (1984, 1987b, 1996) this knowledge represents the horizon against which interpretation occurs. The social interpretation stage in my own framework is therefore the stage at which the link to this kind of knowledge is made a more explicit focus of analysis and discussion. Prior to this stage lifeworld knowledge plays an informing role in interpretation, that is, we draw on it in both the descriptive interpretation and representative interpretation stages of the framework to inform our interpretations of the text. By making lifeworld knowledge the focus of the stage of social interpretation we are identifying what kinds of social knowledge seem to be involved in interpreting the text – economic, political, familial, gendered, etc., – and what its typical characteristics are, i.e. the main features, assumptions, and practices which are usually associated with it.

A final point to make with regard to Fairclough’s procedure is that it seems to correspond quite closely to Habermas’s (1971) view of knowledge as technical, interpretative and emancipatory (Pennycook, 2001). This would seem to add weight to the perception that ‘explanation’ for Fairclough is indicative of an emancipatory discourse as being the preferred political outcome of CDA. It seems reasonable to suggest that just as description presupposes interpretation, so does explanation do the same, and this is one reason why I have not used the term ‘explanation’ in my own framework. All the stages of the TACO framework are stages of interpretation. A second reason is that explanation may also be taken to imply privileged insight or truth and, for the reasons given in Chapters Two and Three, I do not want to suggest this either. In *Fig. 5* Fairclough’s procedure is juxtaposed with my own. This table shows how the TACO procedure differs from as well as corresponds to his.

The principal differences between Fairclough’s procedure and my own have been introduced above. In the main these are:

1. TACO includes a preliminary descriptive interpretation of the text which is prior to a more immanent or detailed analysis of it.
2. TACO in the way it is constructed and proceduralised is centred on the text.
3. All the stages of the TACO framework are interpretative stages.

To these principal differences we can add two more:

- 4. Due to its orientation to the text, the TACO framework includes a deconstructive stage at the close of the procedure.
- 5. The TACO framework adheres to a procedural model of exegesis which is derived from critical social theory.

Fig. 5. Fairclough's CDA and TACO

Fairclough's CDA	TACO
	Descriptive interpretation: the frame of the text, the visual organisation of the text, the topic, the reading position, the preferred reading, and the ideal reader.
Description and interpretation of the formal linguistic properties of texts.	Representative interpretation: description and interpretation of the immanent features of the text - image, grammar, vocabulary and genre.
Interpretation of the relationship between (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text.	
Explanation of the relationship between discursive processes and social processes.	Social interpretation: the social context(s) (lifeworld frames and scripts) which the text seems to be a part of: e.g. contexts of gender, race, disability, economy, politics, family, class, income, age, sex, property, geography etc.
	Deconstructive interpretation: aspects of the descriptive, representative and social dimensions of the text which appear to contradict or undermine the preferred reading.

The descriptive interpretation in the TACO framework corresponds to the first commentary in a Derridean approach, and the representative, social and deconstructive interpretations, together, correspond to the second. This is what makes the TACO framework a ‘doubling commentary’. By constructing the framework in this way, and by making its principal focus the text, the TACO framework can be seen to extend before and after the existing stages of Fairclough’s approach, and also for the same reason to be more explicitly ‘procedural’. These factors are what make the difference between Fairclough’s procedure and my own.

5.2.2 Critical Language Awareness: Wallace's critical literacy framework

To conclude my discussion of procedural frameworks I will now examine how CDA has been applied to educational contexts of use by briefly considering the CLA approach of Catherine Wallace (1992, 1995, 2003). I have selected Wallace's approach because unlike other approaches in CLA (e.g. Janks 1999, 2000, 2001; Lillis and McKinney, 2003) it is not tied to specific teaching materials but may be employed independently with a variety of texts in and outside of the classroom. Wallace's framework (*Fig. 6*) is in this respect similar to my own, except that the constituency for her approach is confined to EFL.

A procedural perspective

Apart from the influence of Halliday which is evident in her framework, Wallace also establishes a broader procedural perspective in relation to it. This is that she views the process of critical reading in a classroom setting as being a procedural one in which students move from an initial response to the text to a more detailed analysis and then to an interpretation. She differentiates between these terms on the grounds that:

... response is first glance, schema activating, and relatively unconsidered; analysis, a closer focusing on the language of the text; and interpretation, a revisiting of initial response in the light of textual scrutiny and peer group discussion. (Wallace, 2003: 24)

Wallace's approach has some characteristics in common with a doubling commentary with the difference that both the first and second readings are 'considered' views of the text. But each has a different emphasis: the first reading is more 'global' than the second; it is concerned with the preferred reading, the ideal reader, and the appearance of the text. In the second reading, beginning at the representative interpretation, the text is analysed in greater detail.

A second difference is that I do not make such a formal distinction as Wallace seems to between analysis and interpretation. Analysis in Wallace's view involves 'the examination of features of texts' and interpretation is 'a view of the overall intention and effect of the text in the light of such examination' (ibid: 24).

Fig. 6 Wallace's (2003) model of critical reading

CRITICAL READING	
A framework for a critical analysis of texts, based on Hallidayan functional grammar	
<u>FIELD OF DISCOURSE</u>	
IDEATIONAL MEANINGS	
(how the writer describes what is going on in the text, i.e. what the text is <u>about</u>)	
PARTICIPANTS	<p>WHAT/WHO is talked about?</p> <p>i.e. what or who are the major participants</p> <p> what or who are the minor participants</p> <p> what or who are the invisible participants</p> <p>HOW are the participants talked about, i.e. what adjectives or nouns collocate with them?</p>
PROCESSES	What verbs (collocating with the major participants) describe what kinds of processes, i.e. material, mental and relational processes?
CIRCUMSTANCES	How specifically are circumstances indicated, e.g. by adverbs or prepositional phrases?
CAUSATION	<p>How is causation attributed? Is agency always made clear?</p> <p>i.e. Who did what to whom? Are actors in subject position?</p>
EFFECT OF THE WRITER'S CHOICES?	
<u>TENOR OF DISCOURSE</u>	
INTERPERSONAL MEANINGS	
(how the writer indicates/his her relationship with the reader and what his/her attitude to the subject matter of the text is)	
PERSONAL	What personal pronouns are selected? How does the writer refer to self, subjects and reader?
MOOD	What mood is most frequently selected – declarative, imperative, or interrogative?
MODALITY	What role does modality play in, for example, expressing a degree of certainty or authority?
ADVERBS ADJECTIVES NOUNS indicating writer attitude	Are there adjectives, nouns or adverbs which indicate writer attitude to his her subject?
EFFECT OF THE WRITER'S CHOICES?	
<u>MODE OF DISCOURSE</u>	
TEXTUAL MEANINGS	
(how the content is organised)	
SEMANTIC STRUCTURE	Is the text narrative, expository or descriptive, as indicated, for example by the use of past or present tense?
OVERALL ORGANISATION	<p>What larger structures does the text have, e.g. in terms of beginnings and endings?</p> <p>In what form is information represented?</p>
THEME	What information is selected for first position, at clause level and at the level of the whole text?
COHESION	How does the text hang together as a text, for example what kinds of connectors are used (related to the semantic structure of the text)?
EFFECT OF THE WRITER'S CHOICES?	

There are two aspects of analysis which are worth noting here. The first is that, as we have already seen with regard to Fairclough, all analysis is necessarily partial as what is analysed or described is a question of selection. Wallace makes this point herself. Wallace is therefore using the term analysis in the same way as Fairclough uses description, to refer to the detailed examination of the specific features of the text. This leads to the second issue, which is that Wallace suggests that analysis in her procedure is simply a description of these features rather than also an interpretation of them. The interpretation comes later. In my own framework analysis and interpretation are brought together so that the description of the detailed features of the text is combined with an interpretation of them. Where Wallace's procedural framework for the classroom moves from initial response, to analysis to interpretation, I take a slightly different approach by moving from global interpretation, to analytical interpretation, to social interpretation and to deconstruction. Analysis in this perspective is thus a term for describing a type of interpretation, one that is more focused on the local detail of the text than it is on the global. Rather than a description which records that 'a', 'b' and 'c' features occur in a text, analysis also includes their interpretation.

Wallace seems to have been concerned to introduce a distinction between analysis and interpretation because of Widdowson's (1995a) criticism that by being politically committed, and by denying the possibility of disinterestedness, CDA precludes 'analysis' and is therefore in his words: 'a contradiction in terms' (Widdowson, *ibid*: 159). In Widdowson's view 'analysis ... seeks to *reveal* those factors which lead to a divergence of possible meanings, each conditionally valid' whereas 'interpretation is a matter of converging on a particular meaning as having some kind of privileged validity' (Widdowson, 1995a: 159, *my emphasis*). Widdowson's view rests on the assumption that *revealing* those factors which lead to a divergence of possible meanings is therefore not an act of interpretation. This seems contradictory because what is 'revealed' is always a matter of interpretation as analysts will often have different opinions about what this is. Second, it also rests on the assumption that to adopt a disinterested and therefore apolitical and non-ideological position on analysis is to be neither political nor ideological. This is a second contradiction. All perspectives are both political and ideological, there are no neutral standpoints. Third, Widdowson imposes his own highly partial, committed, and *interested* definition on the term 'analysis' in order that alternative uses of it are made invalid and so that he may dictate the terms of the debate regarding what is and what is not 'applied linguistics' (see Widdowson, 2000b). Widdowson's view of analysis is therefore also his own interpretation of what analysis can

and should mean. In this light it is not just CDA's position which seems contradictory, it is also his own, because he wishes to legitimate analysis and invalidate interpretation by means his own definition of interpretation, that is, 'by converging on a particular meaning [in this case of *analysis*] as having some kind of privileged validity' (Widdowson, 1995a; parenthesis added).

The separation of analysis from interpretation which Wallace introduces into her procedural format seems an unnecessary concession to Widdowson's perspective, but by introducing it Wallace exposes herself to some of the same kinds of contradictions, particularly on the question of analytical neutrality, or what she refers to as the possibility for achieving 'a degree of distance or detachment' (Wallace, 2003: 24). If the above points indicate differences between Wallace's procedural perspective and my own, amongst the similarities is her socio-theoretical conception of classroom discussion. This is based on Habermas. The difference is that rather than theorising this in procedural terms, as a question of the construction of a practical discourse in the public sphere, she theorises this more normatively, in terms of universal notions of truth and justice as measured against the horizon of Habermas's ideal speech situation. In her words: 'there must be available to readers and all social subjects an idealised version of truth and justice embodied in undistorted communication for us to be aware of the principal of skewedness or distortion' (Wallace, *ibid*: 29). I have presented my own positions on ideology, truth, and justice at earlier points in this study and so I will not repeat them here except to say that rather than operating from a perspective of idealised notions of truth and justice, which in my view are ahistorical and outside discourse, I have sought to operate from the historically and discursively situated position of an opposition to closure. That said, insofar as Wallace pursues claims to truth 'if not ultimately to arrive in the possession of an absolute truth' (*ibid*: 29) her position does not seem entirely incompatible with mine. The problem as I see it is not so much the journey, as the totalism which is implied by arrival. By putting it as she has done, Wallace seems to suggest that she shares this perspective as well.

The language model

In relation to language and the critical analysis and reading of the text, a more fundamental difference between Wallace's framework and my own is that hers is structurally as well as procedurally dependent upon the language model of SFL: the ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning dimensions of the text, and the field, tenor and mode dimensions of the

context (cf. Chapter One: 1.2). The dialectical quality of Hallidayan linguistics in moving beyond the text in order to incorporate the relationship with the context is what has recommended the SFL to CDA and this is why most critical reading procedures are based on it. The problem which this presents is twofold. On the one hand, as I have suggested in Chapter Four, Hallidayan SFL is not a critical social theory in respect of how I have interpreted this term, and so there seems to be something which is not entirely satisfactory about adopting it as the basis of a *critical* procedure for analysing texts in which all the other elements have been critically theorised. On the other, in relation to the kinds of ‘non-specialist’ educational applications which are the concern of this study, it has been noted by many within CDA that the SFL model can be overly abstracted and difficult to apply. In my view, it should be possible to undertake critical readings of texts which are similar to those which can be found in Hallidayan models of CDA without relying on the conceptual framework which the SFL model presupposes. The point where Hallidayan linguistics tends to become problematic, as we saw with Fairclough, is the point at which the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings are multiply ascribed to the lexical, grammatical and rhetorical features of the text. Wallace has sought to avoid this by attaching a discrete set of questions to each of the text-context dimensions and this is reasonably effective. But as she notes herself: ‘it may be that traditional grammatical terms, already known or partly known by students, can serve the purpose equally well’ (Wallace, 2003: 194).

My contribution is that I have attempted to move my own framework away from the SFL conceptual model while retaining a focus on discourse features which are derived from a Hallidayan perspective, such as vocabulary selection, agency, and pronoun usage, and which are shared with other reading frameworks in CDA. The effect of this is to make Hallidayan grammar a linguistic resource in a framework for critical reading rather than the organising principle by which it occurs (cf. sections 1.2, 1.4.3, 1.6.1,). In addition to retaining an interest in Hallidayan discourse features, I have also been influenced by Wallace’s use of a set of ‘orienting questions’ which are prefatory to her framework and around which she organises her classes. She has adapted these from Kress (1989).

1. Why has the text been written?
2. To whom is the text addressed?
3. What is the topic?
4. How is the topic being written about?
5. What other ways of writing about the topic are there?

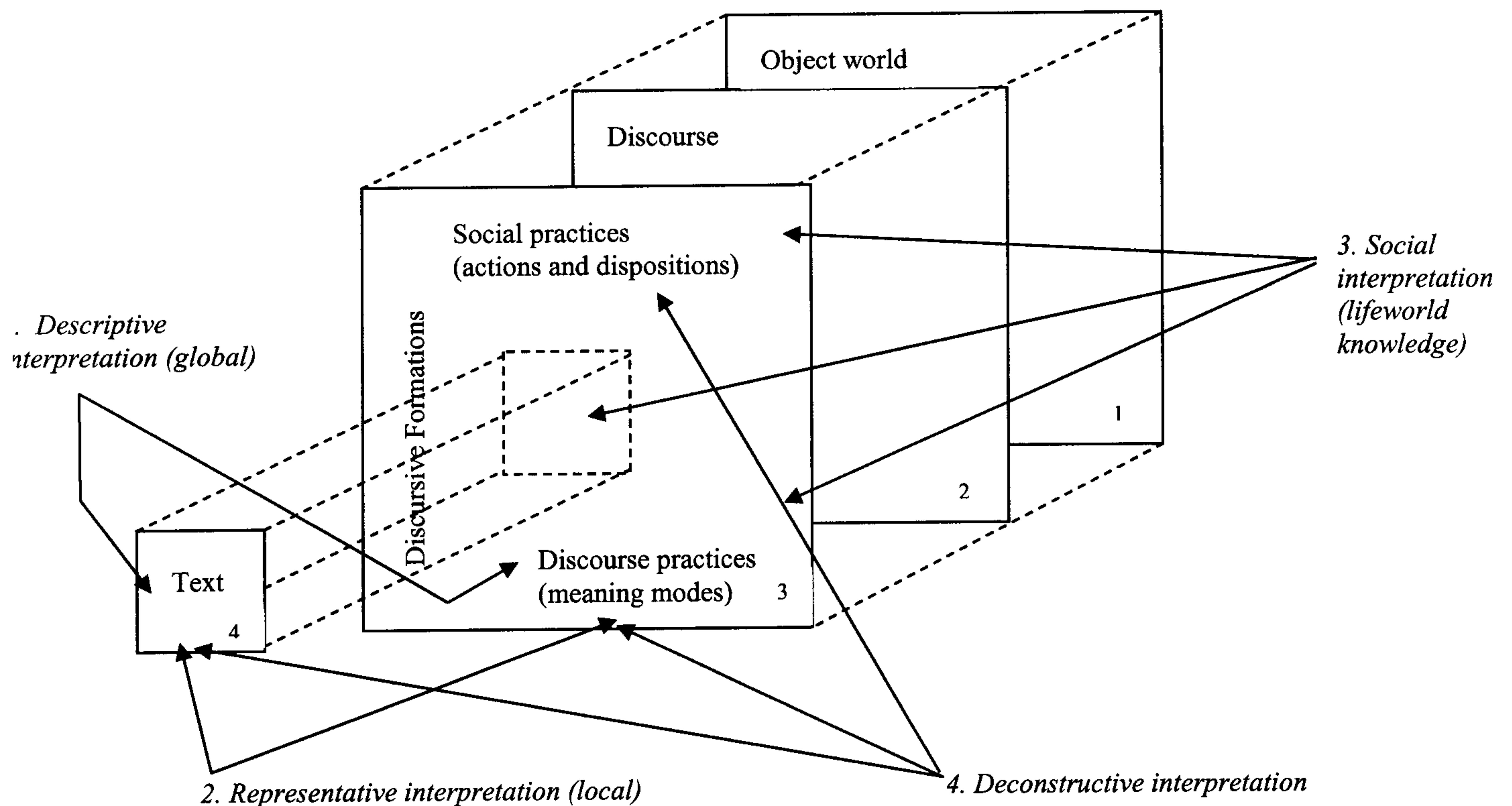
These questions are partly responsible for the way in which the description stage of the TACO framework is organised and expressed (see 5.3.3). With regard to the organisational differences which exist between Wallace's framework and my own, I have gathered the discourse features of the text together and put them into the second stage under representative interpretation. I have also divided these into four areas of interest: image, vocabulary, grammar, and genre (see 5.3.3). Thus in my framework, unlike in Wallace's, not only are the linguistic dimensions made more explicit, but an element of visual interpretation is included as well. These are amongst the more significant differences between Wallace's framework, and also Fairclough's, and my own. By putting the discourse features in the same place my aim has been to make the analysis of them more manageable for students. I also feel that by making the interpretation of the discourse features the second stage of the framework this is able to act as an 'anchor' for the social and deconstructive interpretative stages which follow it.

5.3 Towards an educational framework of analysis: TACO

5.3.1 TACO: a 'four-dimensional' model of discourse

I have noted that one of the strengths of Fairclough's approach is its illustration of how three levels of discourse (text, discourse practice, and socio-cultural practice) correspond to three stages of discourse analysis (description, interpretation, and explanation). This has led me to think about how the four stages of the TACO framework might be said to correspond to the constructivist and multimodal view of discourse which was outlined in Chapter Two (2.3.4). There I argued that TACO takes a social constructivist view of discourse, one which is derived from the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe (1985, 1990), Foucault (1980, 1989), and Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996). Taken together I have argued that these theories make for a world which may be understood as discursively realised, but also one in which the existence of a reality outside discourse is not denied. I have also said that while I can see that there is a distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices, it is my view that non-discursive practices, if they are to have any meaning within the realms of human knowledge and experience, must also be discursively realised. In other words, in order for non-discursive practices to be non-discursive, they must be classified as such, they have to be 'named'.

Fig. 7 TACO: a 'four-dimensional' view of discourse



With this perspective it is possible to conceive of a representation of discourse which has four dimensions. This is illustrated in Fig. 7. In this model the first dimension is the object world which exists *outside* discourse (1). This is the existing world or universe of 'objects' understood in the broadest sense as 'anything that exists'. The second dimension is discourse itself (2). It is through discourse that the object world is realised and becomes part of human knowledge and experience. The relationship between discourse and the object world is such that although the object world is strictly speaking *outside* discourse, for the purposes of this illustration I am treating it as a discourse dimension. In the third dimension discourse is divided up into the 'realms of knowledge' or *discursive formations* which constitute the object world, Fairclough's 'orders of discourse' (3). Each discursive formation is informed by specific social practices. These are the actions and dispositions (of people) which are characteristic of a discursive formation, and make for its identity. If the discursive formation is conceived of at an institutional level, then these are the practices which are typical for a particular institution. Taking the university as an example of a certain type of institutional discursive formation, these practices would include lectures, admissions procedures, staff meetings, report writing, applying for research funding, organising academic conferences, attending exam boards, etc. These social practices are typical of the university as an

institutional discursive formation and involve people ‘doing’ things, such as gathering in certain places at certain times, writing, researching, lecturing, studying, accepting, rejecting, passing, failing, etc. If people *do* all of these things, they are performing the social practices which are needed to constitute the university’s identity as a university.

Intimately bound up with what we do are the discourse modes by which we do them. These discourse modes are the representational resources with which human beings are able to construct meaning and therefore also to construct texts. The social practices of the discursive formation require modes of meaning projection in order for them to be realised as social practices and in order for the social practices to be carried out. These meaning modes are multimodal, they include, among others, speech and writing, spatial arrangements, colours, images, shapes, silences, and gestures. These modes or *discourse practices* correspond to Fairclough’s processes of production. When representational modes come together to signify a meaning which is understood by a community of sign users, these modes become one or more texts, depending on how the user wants to frame them, or what s/he decides or is motivated to include in them. The text (4) should therefore be understood in this model as an *instance* of discourse. It is like a piece in the wider jigsaw of discourse and makes for the fourth dimension in the discursive realisation of the object world.

This 4D model of discourse is intentionally in three ‘visual’ dimensions of perspective in order that its layered nature can be seen more clearly. It seems an unusual feature of Fairclough’s ‘3D’ model that it is visually in two dimensions rather than three. Fairclough on the other hand does establish parallel links between his three dimensions of discourse (text, discourse practices, socio-cultural practices) and his three stages of discourse analysis (description, interpretation, explanation). In the 4D representation of discourse in *Fig. 7* there is no exact parallel of this kind, the stages of analysis are not each matched to one of the four dimensions of discourse. Instead I have indicated the main points where these stages intersect with the overall model. This shows that the descriptive interpretation is centred on the ‘global’ discourse features of the text (overall layout and appearance, preferred reading, ideal reader); the representative interpretation is focused on the ‘local’ discourse features of the text (image, grammar, vocabulary, genre); the social interpretation is focused on the link between the text, its discourse practices, and the wider social practices and assumptions which these suggest (lifeworld frames and scripts); and the deconstructive interpretation is focused on the relationship between the text and the immanent dimensions of description,

representation and social interpretation. The deconstructive interpretation in this model therefore points to the text, to discourse practices, and to social practices. It is through the discourse practices of the text that social practices and assumptions are implied. The deconstructive interpretation of the text may be said to run through the dialectic between discourse practices and social practices, inasmuch as they are equally determining of the other (see 5.3.3 below). It is important to see the representative features of the text and wider social practices and assumptions as closely bound up with one another and not separate. Reading which assumes even a minimal engagement with the text always involves making these kinds of connections. In the next section (5.3.2) the TACO framework is set out. This is followed by a commentary (5.3.3) on the individual features which are included in it.

5.3.2 TACO: A procedural framework

The Text as a Critical Object

1. **Descriptive interpretation:** the frame of the text, the visual organisation of the text, the topic, the reading position, the preferred reading, and the ideal reader.
2. **Representative interpretation:** interpretation of the image, grammar, vocabulary and genre choices of the text.
3. **Social interpretation:** the social context(s) which the text seems to be a part of: e.g. contexts of gender, race, disability, economy, politics, family, class, income, age, sex, property, geography etc.
4. **Deconstructive interpretation:** aspects of the descriptive, representative and social dimensions of the text which appear to contradict or undermine the preferred reading.

Questions to ask:

2. Descriptive interpretation

- What is the frame of the text and how does the text look?
- What is the topic?
- How is the topic being presented (e.g. formal, informal, persuasive, aggressive, angry, friendly, humorous, comic, etc.)?
- What is the preferred reading (the main message of the text; the reading which accords with the way the text seems to want to be read; the reading of minimal consensus)?
- Who might be the ideal reader of this text? E.g. A person who ...

2. Representative interpretation

- What social values can be attached to the **discourse features** of the text (image/vocabulary/grammar/genre)?

Discourse features; some aspects of the text which you can think about:

Image

1. How is the text organised visually? E.g. is it in columns or is it a single block of text? Are words written in different sized fonts?
2. Does the text use words and pictures? If so, what is the balance between words and pictures? Where are words and pictures in relation to one another?
3. If the text is a combination of visual and written modes, or is written in a variety of formats, what is on the left (in the GIVEN position)? What is on the right (in the NEW position)? What is located in the upper part of the text (in the IDEAL position)? What is located in the lower part of the text (in the REAL position)?
4. What are the effects of these choices on the text?

Vocabulary

1. What kind of vocabulary is used in the text? E.g. formal/informal, positive/negative, casual/dramatic, emotional/serious.
2. What semantic fields (word families) do vocabulary choices belong to?
3. What vocabulary is associated with the participants in the text? Do these choices create a particular impression of the participants?
4. Is there any vocabulary which seems very important?
5. What words are given capital letters, italicised, underlined, put in inverted commas?
6. What are the effects of these choices on the text?

Grammar

1. What tenses are used in the text? Do any of these seem very important?
2. Does the text use 'we', 'you' or 'I'? When and how does the text use them?
3. Are there any nominalisations in the text? (E.g. words that end in '-ation', '-ition', '-ience', '-ness', '-ment'). When are they used?
4. When are active and passive constructions used? Are there any common themes attached to the use of these different voices? What is usually foregrounded or backgrounded in these constructions? Are the agents animate or inanimate?
5. In the text as a whole which information is put first? What is thematised?
6. What are the effects of these choices on the text?

Genre

1. To what genre does the text belong? (advertisement, news report, narrative, political statement, notice etc?). Is there mixing of genres?
2. If there is mixing of genres, what are the effects of these choices on the text?

4. Social interpretation

- What social frameworks is the text a part of (e.g. gender, race, economy, business, politics, family, class, income, age, sex, property, geography, etc.)?
- What typical kinds of social knowledge do these frameworks suggest?

5. Deconstructive interpretation

- Does any aspect of the text's internal structure (descriptive, representative, social) appear to contradict or undermine the text's preferred reading?

5.3.3 Commentary

The stages and questions which appear in the framework in 5.3.2 form the content of a class handout which is given to students to guide them with their readings of texts. When the time comes for students to put the framework to use I emphasise that they should treat it as a guide and not as an absolute prescription which must be followed in every detail. For example, I suggest that they should be selective as not all of the questions will necessarily be relevant to their analysis, and that for reasons of the time and (often) also the word constraints they are under, not to feel that they must respond to every question in each stage, but to draw on what they see as the key points for the text and for their reading of it. On the other hand, I do say, particularly if it is a written analysis which is to be handed in and marked, that they should attempt to say *something* about each of the four stages, and that under the representative interpretation stage they should also comment on all four of the discourse dimensions, if only to explain why there seemed little of significance to note.

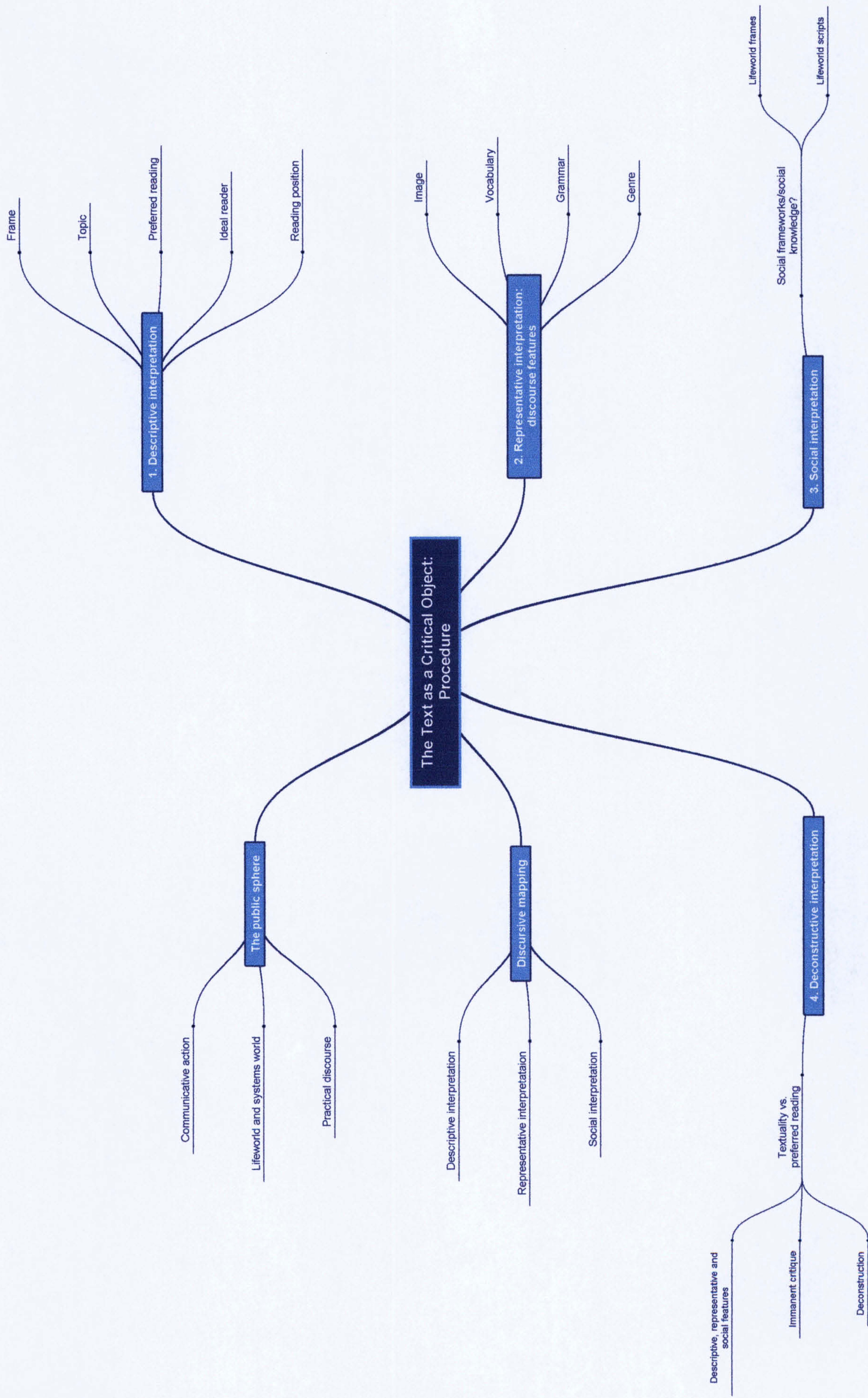


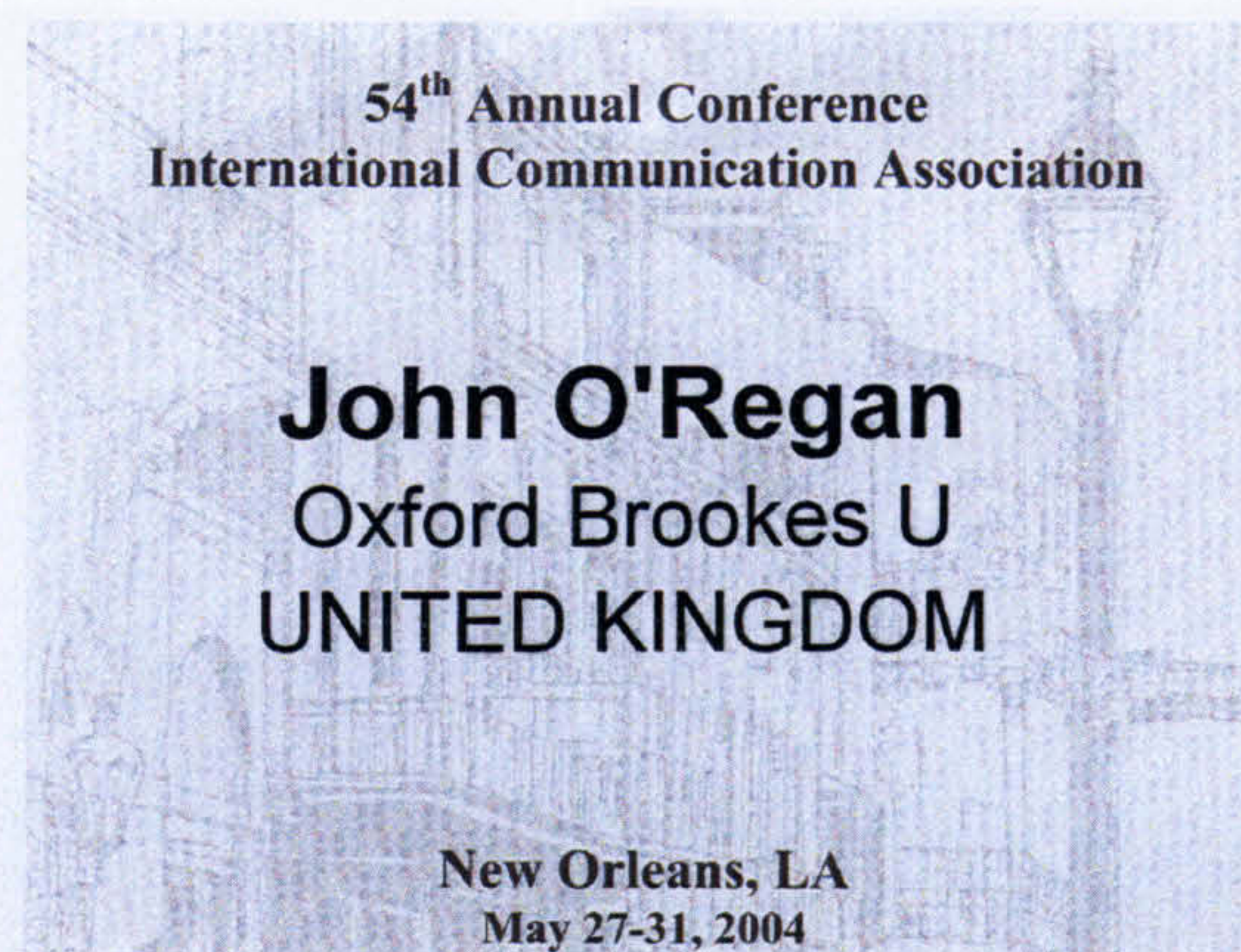
Fig. 8 The Text as a Critical Object: Procedure

Fig. 8 is an illustrative representation of the TACO procedure. In addition to indicating the main stages of the framework itself, it also serves as a reminder of the discursive mapping and public sphere perspectives of this study which were described in Chapter Four. The discursive mapping dimension in this study is seen as a function of the first three stages of the TACO framework, in which the discursive role of the text in the construction of that aspect of the reality to which it belongs is recorded and mapped (cf. 2.2.2, 4.3.1 and 4.3.4). The public sphere dimension concerns the procedural approach to discussion, and may be defined as the articulation of a practical discourse for examining in a classroom context ‘the validity of norms’ which constitute a preferred reading. It is therefore the means by which a discussion can occur (cf. 4.4.2).

Stage one: descriptive interpretation

The aim of this category is to frame the text by deciding what is included in it. Where does the text begin and end? What does and does not belong to it? Deciding on the boundaries of the text to be analysed is by and large a personal decision. Many texts will suggest intuitive boundaries.

Fig. 9 New Orleans conference identity badge



For example, the conference identity badge in *Fig. 9* has a clearly defined white border within which the name of the conference, my name, my university, the country where I am based, and the location and date of the conference I am attending are given. It also includes a vague silhouette of a New Orleans street scene onto which this information has been superimposed. The question the reader has to ask is ‘how much of this am I going to include in my analysis?’ It is possible that because of its clear border, and the fact that it is not printed

on a page with other stretches of competing text, that the reader will decide to treat all the above features as a single text and analyse it accordingly, although in more standard linguistic as well as critical analyses, the image of New Orleans in the background might not be commented on.

Fig. 10 US immigration declaration form

U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service OMB No. 1115-0148

Welcome to the United States

I-94W Nonimmigrant Visa Waiver Arrival/Departure Form

Instructions

This form must be completed by every nonimmigrant visitor not in possession of a visitor's visa, who is a national of one of the countries enumerated in 8 CFR 217. The airline can provide you with the current list of eligible countries.

Type or print legibly with pen in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. USE ENGLISH

This form is in two parts. Please complete both the Arrival Record, items 1 through 11 and the Departure Record, items 14 through 17. The reverse side of this form must be signed and dated. Children under the age of fourteen must have their form signed by a parent/guardian.

Item 7 - If you are entering the United States by land, enter LAND in this space. If you are entering the United States by ship, enter SEA in this space.

Admission Number
261570201 11

Immigration and Naturalization Service
Form I-94W (05-29-91) - Arrival Record
VISA WAIVER

1. Family Name

2. First (Given) Name

3. Birth Date (day/month/yr)

4. Country of Citizenship

5. Sex (male or female)

6. Passport Number

7. Airline and Flight Number

8. Country where you live

9. City Where you boarded

10. Address While in the United States (Number and Street)

11. City and State

Government Use Only

12. 13.

Departure Number
261570201 11

Immigration and Naturalization Service
Form I-94W (05-29-91) - Departure Record
VISA WAIVER

14. Family Name

15. First (Given) Name

16. Birth Date (day/month/yr)

17. Country of Citizenship

See Other Side Staple Here

Do any of the following apply to you? (Answer Yes or No)

A. Do you have a communicable disease; physical or mental disorder; or are you a drug abuser or addict? ☐ Yes ☐ No

B. Have you ever been arrested or convicted for an offense or crime involving moral turpitude or a violation related to a controlled substance; or been arrested or convicted for two or more offenses for which the aggregate sentence to confinement was five years or more; or been a controlled substance trafficker; or are you seeking entry to engage in criminal or immoral activities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

C. Have you ever been or are you now involved in espionage or sabotage; or in terrorist activities; or genocide; or between 1933 and 1945 were you involved, in any way, in persecutions associated with Nazi Germany or its allies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

D. Are you seeking to work in the U.S.; or have you ever been excluded and deported; or been previously removed from the United States; or procured or attempted to procure a visa or entry into the U.S. by fraud or misrepresentation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

E. Have you ever detained, retained or withheld custody of a child from a U.S. citizen granted custody of the child? ☐ Yes ☐ No

F. Have you ever been denied a U.S. visa or entry into the U.S. or had a U.S. visa canceled? If yes, where? ☐ Yes ☐ No

G. Have you ever asserted immunity from prosecution? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IMPORTANT: If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, please contact the American Embassy **BEFORE** you travel to the U.S. since you may be refused admission into the United States.

Family Name (Please Print) First Name

Country of Citizenship Date of Birth

WAIVER OF RIGHTS: I hereby waive any rights to review or appeal of an immigration officer's determination as to my admissibility, or to contest, other than on the basis of an application for asylum, any action in deportation.

CERTIFICATION: I certify that I have read and understand all the questions and statements on this form. The answers I have furnished are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature Date

Public Reporting Burden - The burden for this collection is computed as follows: (1) Learning about the form 2 minutes; (2) completing the form 4 minutes for an estimated average of 6 minutes per response. If you have comments regarding the accuracy of this estimate, or suggestions for making this form simpler, you can write to INS, 425 I Street, N.W., Rm. 5304, Washington, D.C. 20536; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project, OMB No. 1115-0148, Washington, D.C. 20503.

Departure Record

Important - Retain this permit in your possession; you must surrender it when you leave the U.S. Failure to do so may delay your entry into the U.S. in the future. You are authorized to stay in the U.S. only until the date written on this form. To remain past this date, without permission from Immigration authorities, is a violation of the law. Surrender this permit when you leave the U.S.:

- By sea or air, to the transportation line;
- Across the Canadian border, to a Canadian Official;
- Across the Mexican border, to a U.S. Official.

WARNING: You may not accept unauthorized employment; or attend school; or represent the foreign information media during your visit under this program. You are authorized to stay in the U.S. for 90 days or less. You may not apply for: 1) a change of nonimmigrant status; 2) adjustment of status to temporary or permanent resident, unless eligible under section 201(b) of the INA; or 3) an extension of stay. Violation of these terms will subject you to deportation.

Port:
Date:
Carrier:
Flight #/Ship Name:

UCS-4592

The more multifaceted texts become however, the less uniform they will appear. For example, the US immigration declaration form in *Fig. 10* could be treated as one or more possible texts depending on how the reader decides to frame it. How much of this form is the reader going to comment on? Better still, what is the reader not going to comment on? Are, for example, 'See other side' and 'Staple here' a part of the text to be analysed or not? A TACO reader interested in how the US immigration department constructs certain notions of obligation could decide to focus only on the 'Departure Record' section on the reverse of the form. Alternatively, if the reader was interested in the notion of 'undesirability' and the construction of the 'Other', i.e. of people who are not welcome in the USA, then s/he might decide to focus on the section entitled 'Do any of the following apply to you?' Another reader might decide to analyse the whole form in its entirety, including 'See other side' and 'Staple here'. Whatever frame the reader decides upon, this frame will constitute her text and object of analysis.

The descriptive interpretation also incorporates the preferred reading, the topic, and the ideal reader categories. These were described in Chapter Four (4.3.4). The preferred reading refers to what the text seems to want us to understand: its main argument or point of information. By identifying what this seems to be, the reader 'reproduces', in a Derridean sense, and also in the sense of Adornian immanent critique, the 'dominant' or standardly accepted reading of the text, the reading of minimal consensus. In relation to topic, in Chapter Four it was noted that the topic is in some ways a 'mundane' representation of the preferred reading, so that the topic of for example an advertisement about skin cream would be the name of the product itself, such as 'Clinique Skin Cream', whereas the preferred reading might be: 'Buy this skin cream so that you too can have beautiful skin and be more like the person pictured in this advertisement.' Also relevant to the topic at this stage is how it is being presented. Presentation concerns the tenor or tone of the text. Is it formal or informal, argumentative or conciliatory, happy or sad, etc.? The presentation of the text is in part indicative of how the text projects a sense of interpersonal relations with the reader. That is, the text will suggest emotive dispositions to the reader about how it is supposed to be received.

Finally, the descriptive interpretation by setting up a reading position for the reader will also suggest who the text seems to be ideally written for; an 'ideal reader'. This was also discussed in Chapter Four. By asking who the ideal reader might be, the TACO reader is

being asked to use his/her lifeworld knowledge to imagine the type of reader the text is ideally addressed to, who might for example readily agree with the argument being made, if there is one, or who would be most readily interested in, persuaded, or engaged by the text. The ideal reader is a mental construct which is based upon the critical reader's lifeworld knowledge and experience. Since the ideal reader is not a real person, it is also the case that there is no fundamentally correct answer as to who the ideal reader might be. How the ideal reader is constructed will not necessarily be identical for all readers. There are likely to be similarities as well as differences between readers. If these differences are sufficiently large as to suggest very different readings of the text then, as for different interpretations of the preferred reading, why these differences exist can become a point of discussion between readers.

Stage two: representative interpretation

At the stage of representative interpretation students are asked to consider what 'social values' seem to be attached to the discourse features of the text (image, vocabulary, grammar, and genre). Social values refer to the social meanings which individual discourse features might suggest, i.e. the concepts and ideas which individual features indicate and seem to project in the way that they are used. The choices which have been made in the construction of the text will contribute to the impression which the text makes on the reader. By focusing on the detail of these impressions, a more developed and extensive perspective of the text can be achieved which can (at a later stage) be set alongside and compared with the preferred reading.

Of the four stages of the TACO framework the representative interpretation stage is possibly the most involved because it is the most 'analytical', in the sense described earlier of being a type of interpretation which is based on a closer examination of the 'local' features of the text: image, vocabulary, grammar, and genre. For each of these categories in the framework there is a more specific set of questions which students might ask. These are listed under the heading 'Discourse features; some aspects of the text which you can think about.'

The questions under the representative interpretation stage are not exhaustive. This would be difficult to achieve, because the more exhaustive the questions, the less procedural the framework would be. The discourse features which are listed are those which in my view seemed the most straightforward to teach and for students to assimilate. They are also

amongst the key features which other CDA approaches have noted as being worth looking at. Other factors guiding the selection of features to include in the framework were whether the level of detail which they represented was sufficient for students to be able to examine the text closely without having to become specialists in linguistics. There was also a sense in which certain discourse features by being relatively straightforward to teach largely selected themselves, such as vocabulary selection, pronominal usage, and thematisation.

Although the discourse features listed here are not exhaustive, the framework does include a focus on image, which is not to be found in other frameworks. These include features such as pictorial arrangement and layout, typography and colour. Both Clayton (1995) and Wallace (2003) have noted that CDA has tended to neglect the visual. Kress (1993b) cites this neglect as one of the reasons why he ultimately became frustrated with CDA. For the purposes of the TACO framework the visual features which are included are those which seem most salient to the types of texts which might be discussed in the class that I teach. These tend to be printed texts (i.e. not spoken) which include a combination of written and visual modes of expression, such advertisements, newspaper and magazine articles, flyers, product labels, packaging, and official notices, etc. The visual is a feature of both the first and second stages of the framework; that is, at the initial descriptive stage in relation to how the text appears on the page, and at the representative interpretation stage in relation to a more detailed analysis of the visual elements and what significance, if any, these might have. This also entails that in this framework a critical *reading* of the text is also a critical *reading* of the image features of the text. *Reading* is not just to read the words on the page (cf. Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996).

Discourse features of the text:

1. Image

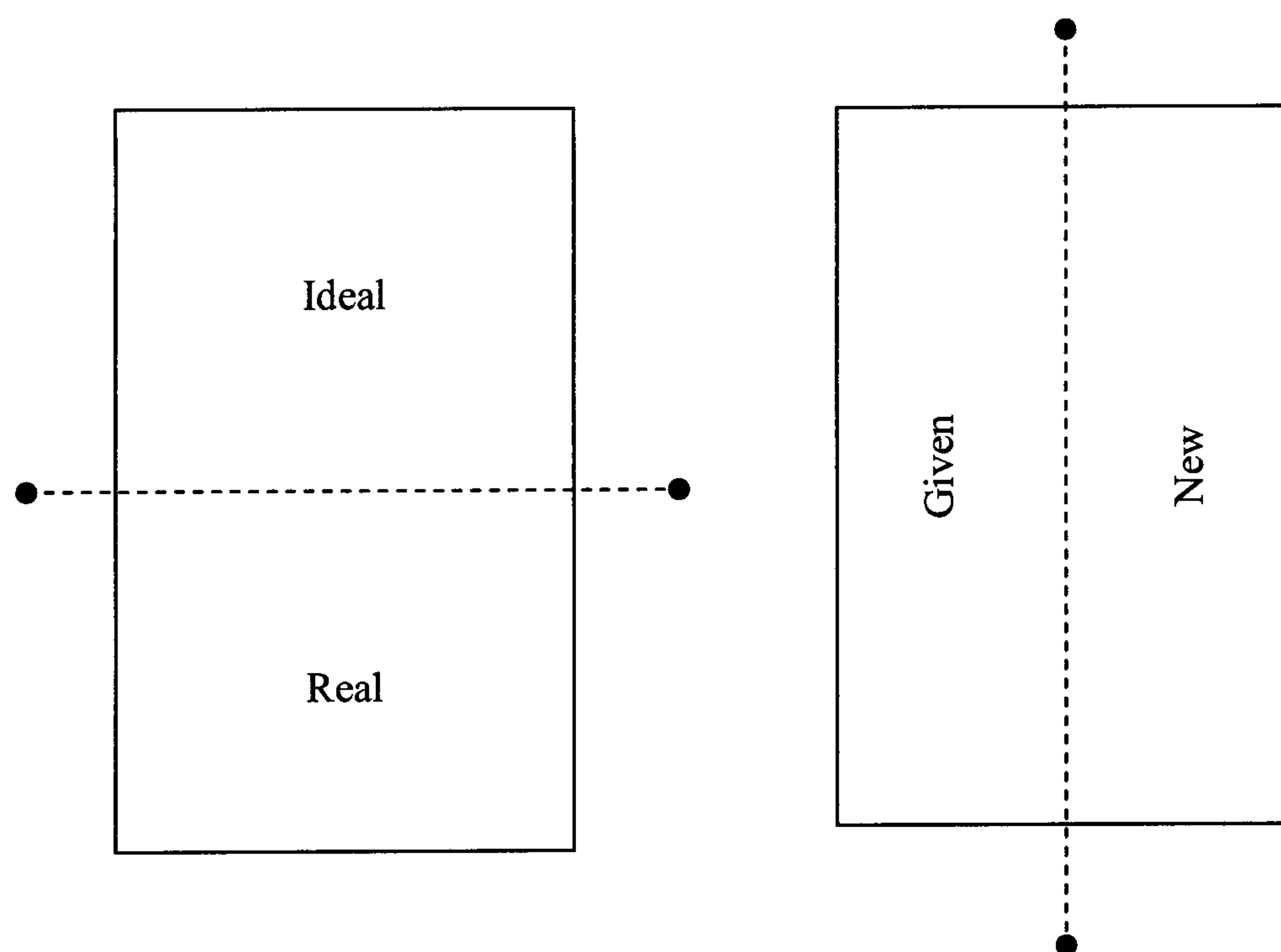
In this part of the framework the aim is to pick up on and develop further the discussion of the salient visual features which were identified at the descriptive interpretation stage, as well as to comment on other visual details if they seem relevant. Under image we are asking how the text operates as an *organisational event*. I use the term organisational event because choices have been made by the producer(s) of the text as to how the text will appear on the page and these may be worth examining for how they seem to impact on the text in terms of the possible meanings which these choices might generate for the reader.

Of the visual features under image which it might be worth commenting on, the visual layout of the printed text is one. Is it for example in columns or is it a single block of text? Rather than wishing to suggest that the presence of columns in the text specifically indicates X and a single block of text specifically indicates Y, the point is for the reader using this framework to consider what contribution, if any, this choice seems to make to the meaning of the text. I have for example been struck by the way magazines and newspapers which are culturally regarded as more 'intellectual' than others, such as 'The Economist' magazine and 'The Times' newspaper in the UK often have a certain textual format in being closely printed in neat angular columns. Sometimes the columns might be divided by black lines in order to give greater definition to the printed text.

The other effect which this has is that this type of print layout also seems to confer a certain amount of 'gravitas' on the text which is in contrast to the more 'energetic' and often more colourful layouts to be found in popular magazines and newspapers, such as TV guides and tabloids, which seem to suggest a greater degree of design for mass consumption (Kress, 1996a; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1998). The other visual feature that is mentioned in the framework is whether there are parts of the text which are written in different sized fonts. Like the issue of the print layout, the purpose here is to reflect on the contribution of these choices to the construction of the text. A fairly obvious use of larger font sizes, for example, is to suggest an element of emphasis and importance in relation to some aspect of the text's overall meaning.

A more significant aspect of image and the visual organisation of the text is how the text is arranged spatially. If the text is, for example, a combination of pictorial and written elements, it may be useful to consider how this is realised and the effects that this realisation process has on the text. Kress (2000b: 199-200) refers to how 'the logic of the disposition of elements in a given space ... leads to a 'visual grammar'' or 'semiotics of the visual space'. The model of visual grammar which Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 1998) propose is one which spatially divides the page of the text so that regular meanings can be attached to its different parts. The principal spatial categorisation follows the left to right, top to bottom reading direction of western alphabetical cultures (Kress, 2000b, 2003). This enables a classification of the page into different semiotic axes which Kress and Van Leeuwen (op cit) label 'ideal' and 'real', 'given' and 'new' (*Fig. 11*).

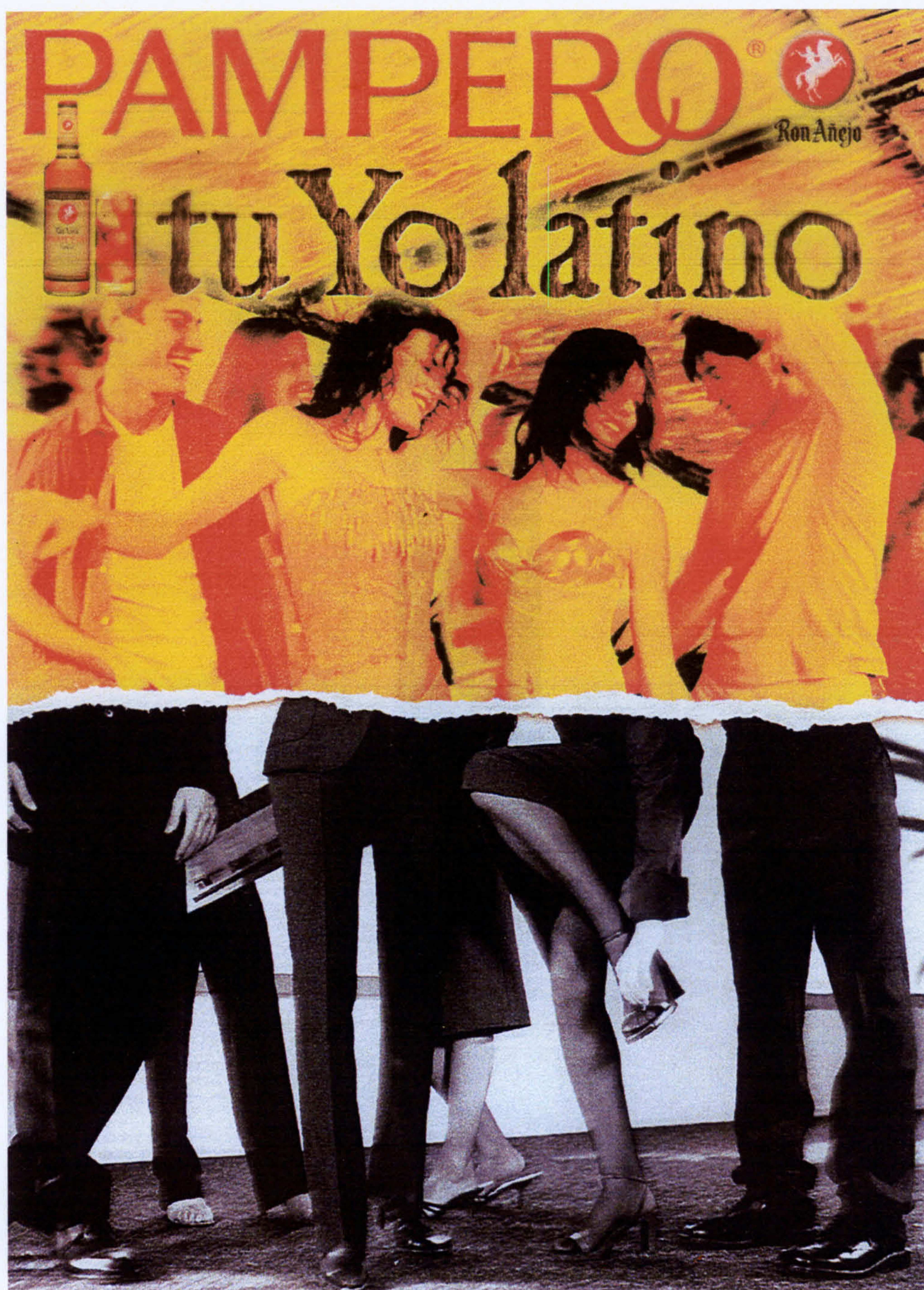
Fig. 11 Kress and Van Leeuwen's semiotic realisation of the visual space



According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 193), the upper section of a text (ideal) tends to make emotive appeal and shows us 'what might be' or what is wished for. The lower section (real) tends to be more informative and practical and shows us 'what is'. This kind of organisation is evident in the Pampero Rum advertisement (Fig. 12) where in the upper half of the advertisement a group of young people are shown from the waist up socially dressed drinking Pampero rum and enjoying themselves in a bar (ideal). In the lower part of the text, we see the same bodies from the waist down, only they are now dressed formally for work in dark suits and skirts (real), and in a manner which suggests an element of success; they are young educated professionals.

The differences between the ideal and the real in this advertisement seem to suggest certain social meanings regarding the people portrayed in the advertisement, the product, and their relationship to it. An additional aspect of the ideal/real continuum is that the ideal often seems to suggest some conceptual, cultural or ideological perspective. In the Pampero advertisement this conception might be said to relate to lifestyle, leisure, western concepts of enjoyment, and possibly also of female sexual freedom; the women in the ideal part of the advertisement are for example dressed so that their upper bodies are partially exposed, and their figures on view.

Fig. 12 Pampero Rum advertisement



Muy Interesante, May, 2000

An additional aspect of the spatial relationship between the ideal and the real is that the ideal can also be a space where more disturbing images are portrayed. On newspaper front pages for example, pictures of maimed, dead, dying, and starving people are not uncommon. These are usually accompanied by a written account below the main picture, in the real, of the events and circumstances to which the image is related. Rather than being what ideally

‘might be’, the image is, on the contrary, a visual representation of what has already passed. In these circumstances the ‘ideal’ is less about desire, hope or aspiration, but is more viscerally conceptual. In other words, rather than projecting a notion of the ‘ideal’ as in some way ‘positive’, the effect of images of death and starvation is to project a vision of war, of famine, or of natural disaster, which is ideal only in the sense of being related to ideas or conceptions in which ‘ideal’ does not have a positive or affirming meaning. This type of ideal/real arrangement in which the ideal is more disturbing than affirming was especially prevalent on the front pages of newspapers in the aftermath of the ‘Tsunami’ which struck many of the coastlines of South East Asia on 26th December 2004.

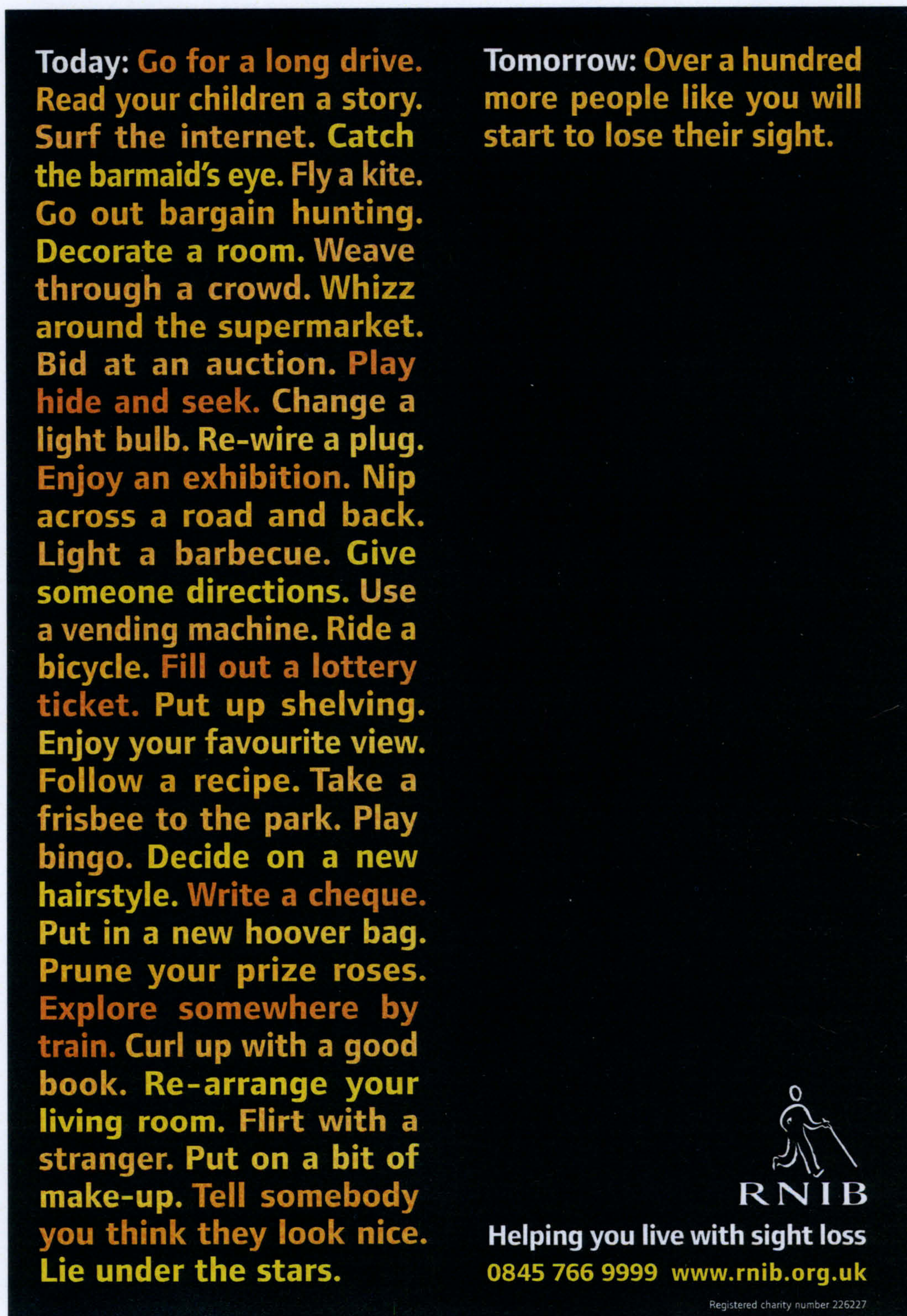
When we turn to the given and new axis of the page, just as we move from top to bottom so, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen, in western alphabet cultures, does our gaze tend to be drawn across the page from the left to the right. This echoes the familiar Hallidayan description of the clause in which information it is assumed the reader will accept as already established is placed first and new information is placed second. For example:

The Hutton inquiry, on the basis of its proceedings so far ...	GIVEN
... is being conducted with due thoroughness.	NEW

(‘What Hutton has found’, *The Evening Standard*, 22.08.03)


In the view of Kress and Van Leeuwen there will often be a similar salience to be found in the organisation of image, with the visual information selected on the left representing some given aspect of the reader’s socio-cultural knowledge or experience (cf. lifeworld knowledge and experience) and the information on the right being new and introduced for the first time. The RNIB advertisement below (*Fig. 13*) is a good example of this type of organisation, where the written text on the left of the page lists a series of mundane and taken-for-granted activities belonging to the world of the sighted (given), and the right tells us that every day 200 people begin to go blind (new). The busy writtenness of the given is also in contrast to the spatial emptiness of the new and this contrast is reinforced by the blackness which on the left is merely a background for the written text but on the right has become the foreground. This foregrounding of colour, black in this instance, may be said to signify the fact of losing one’s sight and becoming blind.

Fig. 13 RNIB advertisement



Today: Go for a long drive. Read your children a story. Surf the internet. Catch the barmaid's eye. Fly a kite. Go out bargain hunting. Decorate a room. Weave through a crowd. Whizz around the supermarket. Bid at an auction. Play hide and seek. Change a light bulb. Re-wire a plug. Enjoy an exhibition. Nip across a road and back. Light a barbecue. Give someone directions. Use a vending machine. Ride a bicycle. Fill out a lottery ticket. Put up shelving. Enjoy your favourite view. Follow a recipe. Take a frisbee to the park. Play bingo. Decide on a new hairstyle. Write a cheque. Put in a new Hoover bag. Prune your prize roses. Explore somewhere by train. Curl up with a good book. Re-arrange your living room. Flirt with a stranger. Put on a bit of make-up. Tell somebody you think they look nice. Lie under the stars.

Tomorrow: Over a hundred more people like you will start to lose their sight.


RNIB
Helping you live with sight loss
0845 766 9999 www.rnib.org.uk
Registered charity number 226227

By employing Kress and Van Leeuwen's descriptive categories in this way I do not wish to suggest that there are prescriptive semiotic rules which apply to the visual organisation of texts. Rather than prescriptions for determining how texts *should* be organised visually, the given/new and ideal/real are descriptive categories against which the image features can be

measured and considered. In some texts what might more usually be associated with the new will appear on the left, for example a product being presented as a remedy for flu, and what might more usually be associated with the given, for example a picture of a person with an obvious cold, will appear on the right. So that rather than moving from a representation of a problem on the left (given), to a solution of that problem on the right (new), the problem and the solution seem to be reversed.

Just as there is no prescriptive rule for the ordering of the given and the new, there is also no prescriptive rule that pictorial information should appear in the ideal, and written associated commentary or description in the real. The order can always be reversed, and often is. Some texts may also not lend themselves to this type of classification at all and appear visually random. But even though some texts might not follow these patterns closely, or when categories seem to be reversed or are in some other possibly random order, this can be worth commenting on because these differences may suggest meanings to the reader which are additional to those which might be implied by a more predictable or 'standard' visual arrangement of the text. What these meanings might be will be determined by the reader's knowledge and experience of other possibly similar texts, and her lifeworld knowledge more generally.

For each of the discourse dimensions of this stage of the framework the final question under each dimension asks the reader to consider the effects that these different choices seem to have on the text, and therefore also on the reader's reception of the text. It may be for example that these choices reinforce the reader's perspective of the preferred reading. On the other hand, it may be that there are aspects of the image features of the text which do not seem to be wholly in accord with this reading. If this is so, then this incongruence or dissonance in relation to the preferred reading may become the basis of a deconstructive interpretation at a later point in the framework. The idea for asking about the effects of discourse choices on the text is influenced by Wallace's model (1992, 2003) where she poses the question 'Effects of the writer's choices?' at each stage of her procedure. I have elaborated this slightly so that it is *the effects on the reader's perception of the text* which the reader is asked to consider. Moreover, I have tried to avoid the suggestion of knowledge of a specific writer's intent which Wallace's wording seems to imply. It may be that the writer did not choose, or would not agree, that he or she had chosen a particular course of action. In other words, since we cannot know or see the mind of the writer, and cannot share in the

conditions of the production of the text, responsibility for the choices which have been made in the text is ‘decentred’ so that the concern is not with what a particular writer or text-producer has done, but with what in the view of the reader the text is doing on its own.

2. Vocabulary

The vocabulary dimension of the TACO framework is concerned with lexical features of the text and the social perspectives or values which these may suggest to the reader.

1. What kind of vocabulary is used in the text? E.g. formal/informal, positive/negative, casual/dramatic, emotional/serious.
2. What semantic fields (word families) do vocabulary choices belong to?
3. What vocabulary is associated with the participants in the text? Do these choices create a particular impression of the participants?
4. Is there any vocabulary which seems very important?
5. What words are given capital letters, italicised, underlined, put in inverted commas?
6. What are the effects of these choices on the text?

This choice of questions has been largely influenced by the CDA and CLA frameworks which have appeared earlier in this chapter, and also by CL (Fowler and Kress, 1979a). As such they are also influenced by understandings of lexical collocation and cohesion in Hallidayan grammar (cf. Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Where there are differences these relate to the use of metalinguistic descriptors like ‘overwording’ and ‘overlexicalisation’ to refer to features of lexis (cf. Fowler and Kress, 1979a; Fairclough, 1989, 2001). Instead I have sought to express the same idea in fairly non-technical terms so that for example the phenomenon of ‘overlexicalisation’ in CL and in CDA is expressed via the question ‘Is there any vocabulary which seems very important?’ The outcome of asking such a question is the same; all I have sought to do is to obviate the need to use a technical term to achieve it. A similar reasoning applies to many of the questions which appear here as well as elsewhere in this framework.

Of the above questions on lexis, 2, 3, and 5 will require some further explanation in class. Semantic fields, as the parenthesis indicates, refer to words which are in some mutual meaning relation with one another. This might be because they belong to an identifiable meaning group, because they are in some relation of synonymy, or because there is some

relation of complementarity between them. For example, 'inflation', 'deflation', 'retail price index', 'trade deficit', 'balance of payments', 'trade surplus', and 'GNP' are all terms associated with the study of economics; 'inflation' and 'retail price index' are more or less synonymous; and 'trade deficit' and 'trade surplus' while not synonymous, are complementary. Rather than applying the specific categories which Halliday and Hasan (1976) identify, I felt it was sufficient to talk in terms of semantic fields and 'word families' and to still make the same kinds of connections as the ones which they suggest.

Question 3 is partly derived from Wallace (1992, 2003) but is also common to CL and to the CDA of Fairclough. What words are collocated with which participants in the text can be suggestive of how the text constructs an impression of those participants. For example, if there is a large number of negatively connoted lexical items associated with a particular participant, this can have the effect of portraying that participant in an uncomplimentary light. The participants in the text need not be human (cf. Fowler and Kress, 1979a; Halliday, 1994). They might be countries, buildings, political parties, ideas or any number of objects or beings. There is thus a sense in which collocation may suggest a certain social construction of reality, or world view, which is based on the cumulative connotations of the words and phrases attached to different entities in the text.

Question 5, 'What words are given capital letters, italicised, underlined, put in inverted commas?', refers to instances where the text reproduces words which either have some socio-cultural importance for a community or which may simply be important to the text in some other way as a means of signifying, for example, emphasis or disassociation. Capital letters can be of interest in relation to what they are applied to in a text. As Fairclough (1989, 2001) notes, capital letters suggest a level of importance being attached to a particular object or idea in the social construction of the text. 'Member of Parliament', for example, tends to attract capitals. This may be compared with 'member of the public' which does not. Words and phrases which attract capital letters, as well as being invested with socio-cultural importance more generally, can also be simultaneously indexical of the relations of power which a social community has adopted, even where such relations are often contested. There are for example many people in the UK who disagree with the UK political system and contest the legitimacy of its exercise of power. Nevertheless, the use of capital letters for entities such as 'The Queen', 'Members of Parliament', the 'Royal Family' and 'New Labour' remains a feature of their written discourse.

Where capital letters routinely confer special status on names of countries, institutions and job titles, and are also indexical of standardised notions of power, italicisation, underlining and inverted commas may suggest emphasis. One of the more significant features of inverted commas is when they are used to suggest something over and above the locutionary meaning of a word or phrase. In many texts this will suggest disassociation or disagreement with this surface meaning. For example, in this short extract from a newspaper leader the word “homegrown” has been placed in inverted commas.

... US intelligence confesses it has little clue to the bombers’ real identities. Much of it may be “homegrown” acts of suicide by young Iraqis who have been radicalised by the occupation. (‘Blind to the Truth’, *The Guardian*, 18.06.2004: 21)

This might be interpreted as suggesting a certain discomfort on the part of the writer with the use of “homegrown”, possibly because in the context of suicide and death, it seems insufficiently solemn and serious. If ‘homegrown’ were being collocated with ‘vegetables’ rather than ‘acts of suicide’ it is less likely that it would appear in inverted commas, or that it would generate any additional significance beyond its locutionary meaning. On the other hand, if in relation to vegetables ‘homegrown’ did attract inverted commas, then this might suggest some other meaning again, for example that they were not in fact ‘grown at home’ but somewhere else.

3. Grammar

The grammar section, especially if students have not been introduced to grammar before, is likely to be one of the more difficult aspects of the framework for them to grasp. There are six questions in the grammar section of which the first four require some grammatical understanding if the reader is to employ them with any effect in relation to the text.

1. What tenses are used in the text? Do any of these seem very important?
2. Does the text use ‘we’, ‘you’ or ‘I’? When and how does the text use them?
3. Are there any nominalisations in the text? (e.g. words that end in ‘-ation’, ‘-ition’, ‘-ience’, ‘-ness’, ‘-ment’). When are they used?
4. When are active and passive constructions used? Are there any common themes attached to how these are used? What is usually foregrounded or backgrounded in these constructions? Are the agents animate or inanimate?
5. In the text as a whole which information is put first? What is thematised?
6. What are the effects of these choices on the text?

Tense

For the purposes of critical reading it would be useful for students to know at least the names of the principal tenses in English and their main uses. The importance of tense is that it encodes a validity claim in relation to a perceived reality. Thus, if someone says: 'I did all my Christmas shopping yesterday', this utterance involves the truth claims that (i) the event happened in the past and (ii) that the action which is referred to is completed, i.e. that there is no more Christmas shopping to be done. In grammatical analysis this is sometimes referred to as 'aspect' although I am using it in a slightly different manner than it is used in some standard descriptive grammars (cf. Leech and Svartik, 1994). It is aspect, i.e. how the user *sees* the situation, which will determine the choices which he or she will make in relation to tense, and in relation to language structure more generally. In other words, whether to say 'I ate', 'I eat', 'I am eating', 'I have eaten', 'I have been eating', or 'I will eat' will depend on my aspect. Aspect, by encoding a perspective, may be said to make grammar ideological; i.e. it presents a view of reality which is grammatically organised from the perspective of the language user. In relation to tense, 'aspect' refers to how tenses are expressed relative to the individual perspective of a language user. At its most basic level this entails a choice between the progressive and the simple in the use of tenses. This is illustrated in the following table:

STATEMENT	TENSE	ASPECT	MEANING
Karin researched CDA	past	simple aspect	complete
Karin researches CDA	present	simple aspect	routine
Karin is researching CDA	present	progressive aspect	temporary
Karin has researched CDA	present perfect	simple aspect	complete
Karin has been researching CDA	present perfect	progressive aspect	activity
Karin will research CDA	future	simple aspect	prediction

Choosing the simple or the progressive in each of the above statements thus suggests a different 'aspect' on the part of the language user in relation to the proposition which is being made. In addition to the differences of time in these statements, there are also underlying differences of aspect and therefore meaning emphasis between them. In the above example these can be related to notions of completion, routine, temporariness, activity and prediction. These aspects all suggest an attitude towards truth on the part of the language user. That is, they are each interpretations of a perceived reality.

A special case with regard to aspect is the type of truth claim which can be encoded in uses of the present simple tense. This is because it is through the present simple tense that ‘universalising’ or ‘nomothetic’ truth claims are expressed (cf. Chapter Three: 3.2.2; see also Gee, 1991). These are claims which are presented as being valid in all circumstances. For example, the following statements are universalising truth claims of this kind:

- The earth orbits the sun (Galileo)
- Humans are descended from apes (Darwin)

Universalising truth claims in the way they are expressed through the present simple tense carry an implication of scientific truth and law, and therefore also impartiality. The association with science and law also makes such claims appear difficult to contest because they are presented as being unarguable. The universalising and scientific quality of present simple tense statements is significant to critical reading because of this. This is particularly so when the claim is a personal opinion. In these circumstances it may be of critical interest to note what truth is being claimed, on whose behalf it is being claimed, and to what extent the claim may be said to express an ideological perspective or ‘world view’.

The following short text-extract is from an article entitled ‘We owe Arabs nothing’ which appeared in ‘The Sunday Express’ newspaper on January 4, 2004 (see Appendix B). It contains a number of present simple universalising truth claims, of which the title of the text is one example. These are typed in **bold**.

WE ARE told by some of the more hysterical critics of the war on terror that “it is destroying the Arab world”. So? Should we be worried about that? Shouldn't the destruction of the despotic, barbarous and corrupt Arab states and their replacement by democratic governments be a war aim? After all, **the Arab countries are not exactly shining examples of civilisation, are they? Few of them make much contribution to the welfare of the rest of the world. Indeed, apart from oil - which was discovered, is produced and is paid for by the West - what do they contribute? Can you think of anything? Anything really useful? Anything really valuable? Something we really need, could not do without? No, nor can I. Indeed, the Arab countries put together export less than Finland.** (Robert Kilroy-Silk, ‘We owe Arabs nothing’, The Sunday Express, 04.01.04)

In this extract there are a number of universalising type truth claims being made. In this case the claims that are being made are a combination of personal opinion and supposed 'facts'. It is for example a personal opinion that 'Arab countries are not shining examples of civilisation' and a supposed fact that put together they 'export less than Finland.' These claims are being made on behalf an imagined western public, one which feels morally superior to 'other' non-western cultures. Ideologically, the claims seem to contribute to a perspective of the world as divided between a 'civilised' West and a 'barbaric' East. The significance of these claims from a critical reading perspective is that they take the structure and aspect of universalising claims to truth. The present simple tense because of the power of the truth claim which it encodes is the favoured method for claiming universality for any preferred perspective or belief. The claims which are made in this text-extract are therefore in principle no different to those which are made from the perspectives of science. By putting these perspectives into this text in this form, it becomes implicit in the text's construction that they are to be received in universal terms, in the same way as the claims of science. This is what gives such perspectives their argumentative force. It is also what makes these statements problematic to themselves because they claim as universals what are not, and never can be, universals. Kilroy-Silk's view that 'we owe Arabs nothing' for example is merely an opinion, and yet it is expressed in the form of a universal truth. It seems to be a feature of English that this is so, for it is difficult to imagine how unhedged opinions could otherwise be stated. Nevertheless, there is in-built dissonance in the use of the present simple to express these types of opinions because of the universalising strength of the truth claim which this tense indicates. This cannot really be resolved – we cannot just stop using the present simple – but in texts where such opinions are articulated it can, from a critical reading perspective, be worth looking at the measure of truth which is being claimed because this will often be in excess of what is feasible for the statement being made. In a classroom situation my aim would be to raise students' awareness of the universalising implications of the present simple tense and to suggest these incidences might be worth noting in relation to what the preferred reading seems to be. It is in the narrower folds and recesses of the text, which are the objects of the representative interpretation, that possible gaps and inconsistencies may appear between *what* the text seems to want to say and *how* the text is saying it.

Pronouns

Pronouns are of interest because of the way they suggest interpersonal relationships between the reader and the text and between the text and other social groups. They are chiefly

responsible for encoding social identities. In this category the uses of inclusive and exclusive 'we' are worthy of note. 'Inclusive we', as the term suggests, includes both the audience of the text and the person or persons who have produced the text. It is a means of more closely associating the reader with the truth claims being presented in the text. 'Exclusive we', on the other hand, does not include the contextual audience. For example, the sentence 'In this thesis **we** have examined Adornian immanent critique' is inclusive; and the sentence 'In my university **we** teach for 36 weeks a year' is exclusive. CL and CDA have popularly focused on political discourse in these respects as indicative of the way in which politicians will use pronouns like inclusive 'we' as a means of expressing solidarity and commonality of purpose with their audience. The pronoun 'we' also automatically sets up the opposition 'they'. In texts like the Kilroy-Silk text above, which take a proprietorial stance in relation to group identity, the incidences of 'they', 'them' and 'their' will be significant as a measure of processes of 'Othering' which may be occurring in the text.

Few of **them** make much contribution to the welfare of the rest of the world.
Indeed, apart from oil - which was discovered, is produced and is paid for by the
West - what do **they** contribute?

The inclusive and exclusive aspects of the 'we' pronoun may also be extended to the uses of 'our' and 'us'. These kinds of pronouns when used inclusively are often indicative of artificial intimacy and the exercise of implicit authority claims in which a speaker or writer confers upon him or herself the right to articulate on behalf of others. The 'We owe Arabs nothing' text is a good example of this type of usage. The following extract from a speech by the US president, George Bush, also demonstrates these characteristics. In this extract all the incidences of 'we' and 'us' are inclusive of Bush's assumed audience, i.e. Congress and the American people:

We have faced serious challenges together – and now **we** face a choice. **We** can go forward with confidence and resolve – or **we** can turn back to the dangerous illusion that terrorists are not plotting and outlaw regimes are no threat to **us**. (George Bush, State of the Union address, January 22, 2004)

'Exclusive we' is of interest when it takes on corporate responsibilities, i.e. when it speaks on behalf of an organisation, institution or political grouping of some sort (Fowler and Kress, 1979a). This use of 'we' is indexical of power in the way that it articulates the perspective of

an organisation. Another feature of this use of 'we' is that it is not usually possible to identify clearly who the individuals are that are included in the pronominal reference. The following example employing a corporate type 'we' and 'our' is from an advertisement for a banking conglomerate which appeared in *The Economist* magazine.

You, and UBS. That's how **we** see the heart of **our** business. (*The Economist*, October 16-22, 2004: 15)

Continuing with the theme of interpersonal relations, another pronoun of interest is 'you'. 'You' is frequently used for the purposes of synthetic personalisation in advertising, in political discourse and in newspapers. The following extract from the Kilroy-Silk text is an example of this:

Can **you** think of anything? Anything really useful? Anything really valuable?
Something we really need, could not do without? No, nor can I.

Like 'inclusive we' it is meant to imply solidarity and intimacy between the text's claims to truth and its ideal reader.

A final point which can be made with regard to pronouns relates to the use of 'I'. Where the text makes references to the text-producer, it may be said to be serving a personalising function. For example, it may have the effect of increasing the sense of conviction in the text or serve a humanising function by making the text appear less formal and impersonal. A letter written to a friend is likely to include several incidences of 'I' for this reason. It may be of interest to note the extent to which 'I' is being used in a particular text for the overall effects which this use seems to be having whether personalising, humanising, or opinionated. Where 'I' is not used in the text, the reverse effects may be of interest.

Agency

There are three main aspects of agency which concern this framework. These are nominalisations, active and passive constructions, and whether agents are animate or inanimate. These features are addressed via the following questions:

- Are there any nominalisations in the text? (e.g. words that end in ‘-ation’, ‘-ition’, ‘-ience’, ‘-ness’, ‘-ment’). When are they used?
- When are active and passive constructions used? Are there any common themes attached to the use of these different voices? What is usually foregrounded or backgrounded in these constructions? Are the agents animate or inanimate?

Nominalisations are a means of presenting in the form of a noun actions and processes which would otherwise require a clause with an agent and a verb. They are most noticeably derived from verbs. For example, resign/resignation, fail/failure, attract/attraction, develop/development, prohibit/prohibition, astonish/astonishment, compel/compulsion. Nouns which have the same forms as verbs also count as nominalisations. For example, slaughter/a slaughter, change/change (U), demand/a demand. Nominalisations may also be derived from adjectives. For example: polite/politeness, concerned/concern, resilient/resilience, responsible/responsibility, innocent/innocence, tragic/tragedy. This type of nominalisation is often used as a means of making feelings and attitudes seem more impersonal in ‘analytical’ or formal written texts (Martin, 1989). The regularised endings of many nominalisations has been noted by Fowler and Kress (1979b: 40) and it was this observation which led me to include in the framework some indication of the types of words to look out for, e.g. words ending in ‘-ation’, ‘-ition’, ‘-ience’, ‘-ness’, ‘-ment’. One of the effects of nominalisation is that it involves the deletion of the agents who are responsible for the actions and processes which are being described. For example in this short extract from a news report about a violent confrontation between Muslim demonstrators and Algerian police there are a number of nominalisations. These are in **bold**.

Three people were killed and 15 injured in **fighting** on Friday with police during **protests** against prison sentences imposed on seven leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front ... The FIS leaders were convicted of fomenting **riots** last year that killed 55 people. (‘Armed Muslim fundamentalists clash with Algerian forces.’ Cited in Goatly, 2000: 78)

I have included this example because it is fairly representative of those which appear in CDA descriptions of nominalisations. In these extracts, according to Goatly, it is not clear who was fighting, who was protesting, or who was rioting. He asks: ‘Are these protestors and rioters a small section of the Algerian population, a minority of armed fundamentalists, as the

headline suggests? Or is this a mass uprising of the Algerian people against a non-democratic military government? The subsequent history of Algeria, with 30,000 killed since the cancellation of the elections, might suggest the latter' (Goatly, *ibid*: 79). Here is another example from a speech by Tony Blair, this time from Fairclough (2003: 13):

Tony Blair: The modern world is swept by **change**.

In this example the word 'change' is a nominalisation. Fairclough contrasts this with his own alternative formulation of the same process: 'Multinational corporations in collaboration with governments are changing the world in various ways.' Fairclough notes that in his version the agents of the process ('multinational corporations' and 'governments') are 'textualised'. Both the Goatly and the Fairclough examples highlight how nominalisations can be used to present a certain perspective on events and processes in which agency and responsibility are blurred.

The blurring of agency also applies to incidences of passivisation and, when agents are used, to what type of agent this is, i.e. whether the agent is animate or inanimate. In the following example from a newspaper report about an attack on US armed forces in Iraq, agency is not specified.

A spokeswoman for Halliburton ... said seven of its employees and subcontractors had been wounded. (The Guardian, 22.12.04)

Sometimes in passives the agent is simply moved to another position in the clause rather than elided. When this happens the principal effect is to give greater prominence to the object, or objects, of the verb. In the following extract more prominence is given to faxes and e-mails than to the Home Office:

Mr Gieve, who set up the Budd report, responded angrily to critics who had suggested that key faxes and e-mails had been destroyed, hidden or withheld by the Home Office. (The Guardian, 22.12.04)

The third type of agency-effect involves inanimate nouns. Agents might be inanimate, i.e. not living things, or they might be abstract nouns (e.g. love, hate, fear) or collective nouns (e.g. the government, the UN, the IMF, etc.). In these circumstances specific human

involvement in (i.e. in the form of a named person or group), and responsibility for, the action described by the verb may be obscured. For example:

- **Radon** kills 1000 a year. (The Guardian, 22.12.04)
- **Friends** of David Blunkett's former lover deserted her today and predict she could be forced to quit London. (The Evening Standard, 20.12.04)

The issue is *when* and *to what extent* instances of nominalisation, passivisation and agent-choice should be considered significant in a *critical* reading. The most obvious circumstance under which they might be significant is when the elision of agency and responsibility appears to be deliberate. This might be because a more explicit attribution of responsibility would be personally damaging to the character of the agent or agents involved, and/or when the consequences of the action would be viewed by many as largely negative ones. This is why, where bad news is concerned, it is common for organisations to adopt textual strategies which gloss over personal or collective responsibility, and which distance the organisation (as well as the individuals who work for it) from the potential or observed negative consequences of its actions. When this happens in a text, and there seems sufficient warrant to suggest that responsibility is being deliberately deflected, then it may be of interest to the reader to comment on this. But in many instances this type of warrant is not so evident, and issues of responsibility and blame are not at stake. For this reason it seems important to make an effort to distinguish between what seems to be deliberate manipulation and/or elision of agency and incidences where the elision of agency seems less significant. For example, in the following extracts which all involve elision of agency only one seems to be strategic and deliberate.

1. PISCES (20 February to 20 March): Morning fine for **seeking out** good friends, loved ones, **making plans** to have a good time later; P.M. **making secret arrangements** to bring your talents to one able to aid is best. (Cited in Adorno, 1994: 91)
2. It is difficult to overstate the significance of the decision made by the law lords last week that the **detention** without trial of foreign terror suspects is unlawful. (Leader Column, The Observer, 19.12.04)
3. Defence lawyer to alleged rape victim: ' Was there any exchange around this point where **your pants are being removed** ...?' (Cited in Ehrlich, 2001: 53)

(1) is from an astrology column and contains three nominalisations, although it seems certain that the agent is supposed to be 'you' the reader. In (2) 'detention' is a nominalisation in which those who are responsible for doing the detaining of terror suspects is obscure, but it seems likely that this is the police and prison service under direct orders from the UK government. In (3) the passive seems to have been used strategically by the defence lawyer as a means of distancing the defendant from involvement in the removal of the victim's pants. Here the obfuscation seems intentional (see also Ehrlich, 1998, 2001, 2002).

In the other incidences (1 and 2) the elision seems to be a characteristic of the discourse of these types of texts. In these circumstances, for anyone using this framework, that this seems a characteristic of the discourse would be the key point to record. If this type of elision of agency seems a characteristic of this type of discourse, the reader might then consider whether such depopulation of the text carries any additional significance, in terms of marginalising human involvement and 'say' in what is being described. This is the point which Fairclough (2003: 12) is making with regard to the Tony Blair extract above and present day 'narratives about the global economy.' For Fairclough (2003: 13): 'nominalisation contributes to what is ... a widespread elision of human agency in and responsibility for processes in accounts of 'the new global economy'.' It therefore may also be contributing to the 'mystification and obfuscation ... of agency and responsibility' (ibid). Fairclough is careful not to suggest a deliberate intent to deceive however, unlike Goatly who, in the example of the Muslim protests, does suggest this. My point is that the distinction between more deliberate attempts to obscure and the elision of agency as a feature of certain types of discourse is not one which is often made in CDA. Instead, what may be a standard feature of the discourse is too readily associated with a deliberate attempt to deceive, and also often with a susceptibility to be deceived, and these are the elements which I find problematic.

In the TACO framework the reader should try to distinguish between what s/he sees as a deliberate attempt to obscure agency (e.g. aspects of legal and political discourse), largely innocuous elisions or manipulations of agency (e.g. astrology column discourse, a lot of newspaper, magazine and advertising discourse), and elisions or manipulations of agency which both characterise a particular discourse and which suggest processes and practices in which human involvement has become secondary, incidental and even irrelevant, such as the discourses of globalisation and the global digital economy. These considerations may also

overlap. Texts which contain varieties of elision and agency construction may also include a variety of discourse types, so the reader should be aware that s/he may encounter more than one type in a text and will need to consider, for him or herself, whether or not these seem significant. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 83) refer to the overlapping of discourse types within the same text as ‘discoursal hybridity’ (see also ‘genre’ below).

Thematisation

Thematisation overlaps with agency insofar as passive and active sentences allow for certain elements to be foregrounded and backgrounded in the text. If for example a person or a subject is predominantly foregrounded by being put in the first position in an active or passive clause, then this will give that person or subject a greater thematic role in the text as a whole. It will also be indicative of the overall importance which is being attached to the participant or subject in the text. Under thematisation more generally the framework asks the following question:

- In the text as a whole which information is put first? What is thematised?

This concerns the more global as opposed to clausal ordering of the text, although these aspects are clearly also related. It may be that in the course of the text certain issues or themes are focused on more at the start and that these themes change as the text progresses. What these themes are in terms of how they contribute to the larger rhetorical patterning of the text, and in terms of what the text is doing as a whole, may be worth recording.

4. Genre

The final category under the discourse features of the text is genre. There are two questions which the framework asks readers to consider in this context.

- To what genre does the text belong? (advertisement, news report, narrative, political statement, notice etc?). Is there mixing of genres?
- If there is mixing of genres, what are the effects of these choices on the text?

The first question purposely restricts genre to the identification of conventional text types and does not direct students to an analysis of rhetorical structures or templates (e.g. Hoey, 1983; Swales, 1990; Hatch, 1992). This has been done for the practical reason that identifying text

types seems an easier task than analysing rhetorical templates. There also seems more to be gained from identifying the text type (advertisement, news report, narrative, political statement, fire notice, etc.) because by being able to do so the reader indicates that they already have at least a subliminal awareness of texts as conforming to certain rhetorical templates. That is, they are able to recognise the text type partly because of the way the text organises itself as a textual event. The particular idea of genre which TACO employs was introduced in Chapter Two (2.3.3) where a genre was described as both an element of discourse and as a type of text. A film review is thus an aspect of entertainment discourse in which it exists as both as a convention for writing about films and as an actual film review in a newspaper or magazine. Because it is tied to 'particular networks of social practices' the film review is an example of what Fairclough (2003: 216) calls a *situated genre* (see Chapter Two: 2.3.3).

The first question: 'To what genre does the text belong?' points the student towards the second question by asking if there is mixing of genres. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) have identified *genre hybridity*, defined as a mixing of textual practices and forms, as a discursive feature of the texts of late modernity (see also Harvey, 1990; Jameson, 1998; Fairclough, 2003). Genre hybridity refers to the way in which some texts exhibit the features of more than one genre. For example, in party-political circulars, pamphlets, and broadcasts, the perspectives of political parties are presented to the public in a format and style which is redolent of advertising. These texts are therefore both politically and commercially situated; they exhibit genre hybridity. By being a mixture of genres these texts may also be said to exhibit *discoursal hybridity* as well. That is, they display elements of both political discourse and advertising discourse within them. Texts may contain elements of discoursal hybridity because they will often draw on different discourses in their construction, and will suggest a variety of discourse associations and related assumptions. These, for example, might be legalistic, political, economic, familial, religious, and also discriminatory (e.g. racist, sexist, ageist, nationalistic, homophobic, etc.). The discourse associations of a text and the assumptions which these embody are part of the lifeworld knowledge and experience of the reader. They represent the social frameworks within which he or she interprets the text. These frameworks are the subject of the third stage of the TACO procedure, the social interpretation.

Stage three: social interpretation

The social interpretation of the text is a development of the representation stage towards a more contextual understanding of the text and its relationship to society. In this respect the social interpretation represents an unfolding, from the representative stage, of Derrida's second reading of the text, and of Adorno's immanent interpretation of the object. It also has some correspondence, if not in name, with Fairclough's explanation stage (see 5.2.2). In the social interpretation stage the reader using the framework is being asked to draw upon her knowledge and experience of the world in the interpretation of the text. This knowledge and experience is cued by the descriptive and the representative features of the text which make up the first two stages of the framework. In Chapter Four these modes of perception and understanding were collectively referred to as our lifeworld knowledge (Habermas, 1984, 1987b, 1996).

What distinguishes the social interpretation stage from the first two stages is that it is at this stage that the relationship between our lifeworld knowledge and the discourse(s) of the text become an explicit object of analysis and discussion. It was noted earlier (5.2.2) that by making lifeworld knowledge the focus of the stage of social interpretation the reader indicates the kinds of social knowledge which seem to be involved in interpreting the text – economic, political, familial, gendered, etc. – and what its typical characteristics are, i.e. the main features, assumptions, and practices which are usually associated with it. These concerns are incorporated in the two questions which appear in this part of the TACO framework:

- What social frameworks is the text a part of (e.g. gender, race, economy, business, politics, family, class, income, age, sex, property, geography, etc.)?
- What typical kinds of social knowledge do these frameworks suggest?

With these questions the reader is being asked what aspects of lifeworld knowledge are brought to mind by their reading of the text. The idea is for the reader to draw up a list of these areas. This list may be quite short (two or three items) or somewhat longer depending on how many aspects of lifeworld knowledge are brought to mind and which ones the reader chooses to prioritise. One way of classifying and dividing up this knowledge is to borrow the terms 'frame' and 'script' from cognitive psychology so that we have 'lifeworld frames' and 'lifeworld scripts' (cf. 4.3.4). I have settled on these two terms in preference to 'schema' because I think frame and script better encapsulate the type of categorisation which is being

described. 'Frame' seems more readily to suggest the notion of a '*framework*' of understanding than does the term 'schema', and 'script' more readily the characteristics and practices which a frame might contain. We could then say, for example, that the lifeworld frame refers to *topical* knowledge areas in the lifeworld, such as 'immigration' or 'development economics' or 'teenage pregnancy', and lifeworld scripts refer to the typical knowledge characteristics and social practices which we associate with them, and which enable us to interpret the text and to understand its conventionalised meanings. So that for example the script of a teenage pregnancy frame would involve the knowledge that in British society today young teenagers are having sexual experiences at a much earlier age than in previous generations and that teenage pregnancy as a result of unprotected sex is increasingly common. This script might also include the knowledge (proven or not) that the UK has the highest incidence of teenage pregnancy in the European Union. The scripts that people have for the range of possible frames which exist will not be identical for each person. This is because we all have different life experiences and therefore varying stores of knowledge about different subjects.

When introducing the social interpretation stage, teachers will need to provide some guidance for students because there is a risk that some might assume that a greater level of sociological complexity is involved than the questions in fact intend (cf. Chapter Six). In some respects the social interpretation should already be within the students' reach because it is predicated on their own personal knowledge and experience of the world, and of texts. However, once this is clear, they may still need help in putting their thoughts into words, in organising them according to frames (social frameworks) and their associated scripts (typical social knowledge). Teachers using the framework will therefore need to give some demonstration of what is involved in the social interpretation, for example by choosing one or more sample texts and discussing the social frameworks and knowledge which these seem to imply (for her). The teacher could use the terms frame and script, but this needn't be a requirement. Whether s/he decides to use them or not will depend on the level and type of class that is being taught, and how technical the teacher wishes to be. Whatever decision s/he reaches, if students can be reassured about what is involved in the social interpretation stage, it should become easier for them to describe the characteristics, assumptions and practices which, from their individual perspectives, might be involved. Students' views of the social interpretation and what this indicates about the text will also provide a further 'constellatory' focus for group and class discussion (cf. Adorno, Chapter Four).

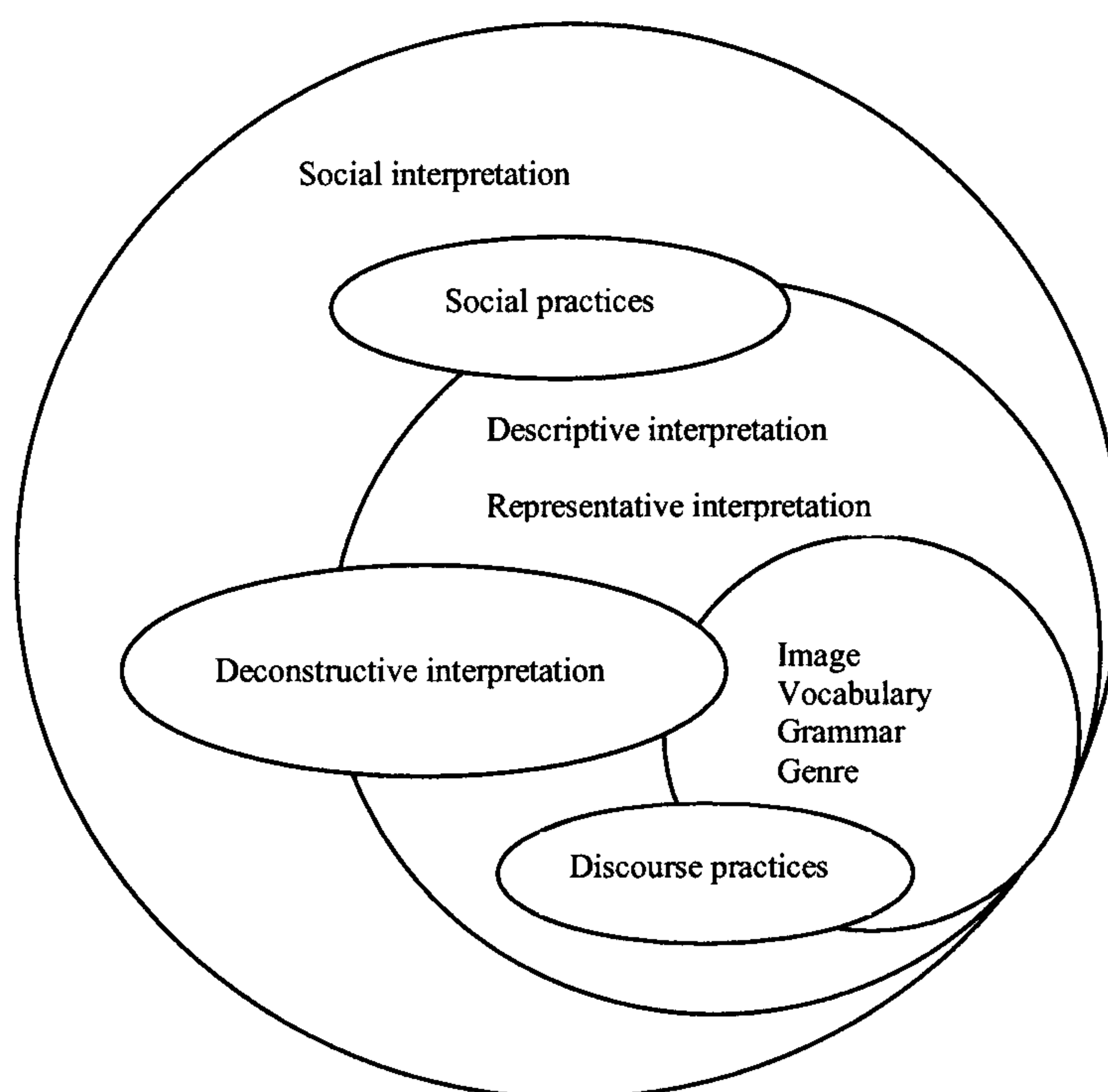
Once the reader has worked through the first three stages of the framework, s/he should look back and reflect on what has been recorded about the text in order to determine how far it seems to be affirming of itself. That is, the extent to which it seems to adhere to and affirm its apparent preferred reading. Is the text internally coherent? Is it structurally sound? Do the various descriptive, representative and social elements work well together? Does the text exhibit textual harmony? Alternatively, are there elements which, on close examination, do not seem to go together so well, or which perhaps are even in conflict with the preferred reading? If so, what are these elements? How are they discordant, and what are the effects of this disharmony on the text? Does the apparent intention of the text, its preferred reading, still appear to hold good, or do the discordances of the text undermine and possibly overturn it? If the reader feels that there are elements of the text which jar with one another, this may open the text to a deconstructive interpretation. This is the final stage of the framework.

Stage four: deconstructive interpretation

The deconstructive interpretation is concerned with apparent imbalances in the text. If these are sufficiently numerous or significant, the preferred reading of the text may be undermined. In 5.3.1 it was noted that the deconstructive interpretation is focused on the relationship between the text and the immanent dimensions of descriptive, representative and social interpretation. I also said that the deconstructive interpretation may be said to run through the dialectic between discourse practices and social practices. What this means is that the discourse practices of the text comprise its visual, lexical, grammatical and genre aspects. These aspects, which are principally confined to the representative interpretation stage, may be said to overlap with the descriptive interpretation stage because of the account of visual and pragmatic meaning which this stage contains. In other words, the descriptive interpretation involves meaningful engagement with the text, but not to the same extent of detail as the representative interpretation. It therefore encompasses at a broader level the more detailed consideration of these features which occurs at the representative stage. The social interpretation stage for its part includes the reader's conception of the social practices which are associated with particular combinations of discourse practices. These social practices are in a dialectical relationship with discourse practices. The types of discourse practice determine certain types of social practice and vice-versa. This is what gives social situations their relative stability and identity, so that for example the social practice of the political interview and the discourse practices which constitute it may be distinguished from a doctor-patient interview or from a customer-service encounter in a shop.

Owing to the dialectical relationship which exists between discourse practices and social practices a deconstructive interpretation of a text is thus simultaneously a deconstruction of both discourse practices *and of social practices*, although in a critical reading its effects will be entirely confined to the text. Social practices in themselves will not automatically be undermined or changed, although the reader's perceptions of them might be. The reason why social practices are also implicated in the deconstructive interpretation of the text, even when they are not directly affected by it, is because without some lifeworld conception of social practices, texts could not be interpreted. Or to put this another way, we need lifeworld knowledge in order to be able to comprehend discourse, and this is the reason why in this framework the deconstructive interpretation may be said to run through the descriptive, representative and social interpretation stages of the procedure. This conception is illustrated in *Fig. 14*:

Fig. 14 Representation of the deconstructive interpretation in TACO



The question which this idea poses is how the deconstructive interpretation is still immanent to the text if it makes recourse to lifeworld knowledge which exists prior to reading. My answer, which I have also given at other stages of this study, is that the lifeworld knowledge needed to interpret the text is not simply extraneous to the text but requires the text for it to be accessed; the text here being understood as a printed text. There is a dialectic occurring

between the text and the reader in the process of reading, otherwise the reader would not be reading and the text would not be a text. In the manner of Fairclough (1989, 2001), the text cues the social knowledge which the reader needs to make an interpretation of the text and, as part of this, to understand the preferred reading. For this reason the deconstructive interpretation is anchored in and immanent to the text rather than separate from it.

In the deconstructive interpretation stage the text should be judged on its own terms. What this means is that a deconstructive reading cannot be one which simply disagrees with the position of the text, either politically or ideologically, or which in a literary manner simply exploits ambivalent meanings in the text for the discordant and disruptive effects this might have (cf. Eco, 1992). Deconstruction in this approach is not concerned with ‘playing’ with the text to see what meanings can be wrung from it, but with showing some respect for how the text seems to want to be read in order that its arguments can be made the subject of close scrutiny. The preferred reading has to be identified first. What is the text trying to say, and having established this, how well is the text saying it? By following this course in a critical reading, the reader voluntarily undertakes to place some limits on the deconstructive interpretation of the text. In an educational context I would say that any deconstructive interpretation of the text must be pragmatically relevant to the preferred reading. If, for example, the utterance ‘Three people are lost in a small rowing boat’ appeared one evening in a television news bulletin, a critical reader would not look to deconstruct the text on the basis that this sentence could be interpreted as meaning that the people in the rowing boat were extremely small (cf. Widdowson, 1995b: 515). This would not demonstrate a duty of care towards the text but would be to impose on it a largely irrelevant meaning for which, in a TACO approach, there would be little deconstructive warrant.

An example of what I mean by a deconstructive interpretation, as well as one which is relevant to the apparent preferred reading, may be illustrated by the text entitled ‘Goodness and Greed’ from ‘The Guardian’ newspaper (April 21, 2000), which can be found on the following page (*Fig. 15*). The topic of this text is the ethics of companies operating in a globalised economy. In this article the view is presented that because companies are not human they cannot exercise ethical principles. This seems to be the preferred reading of this text. If this is accepted, and we then look at the text more closely, certain anomalies may be identified which seem to work against this reading. The principal anomaly relates to agency,

Frances Cairncross However noisy the demonstrations against global capitalism, ethics in business are unenforceable

Goodness and greed

“Smash capitalism”, announced the banners of the protesters in the Washington streets last weekend. Global capitalism has a bad name these days, even when it takes the form of such innocuous British giants as Unilever, currently being reviled on American websites for buying Ben & Jerry’s, makers of fashionable ice cream. So perhaps it is not surprising that more and more companies want to be seen to be good. They set up advisory committees on social responsibility; they write codes of corporate ethics; they appoint ethics officers; they talk of their duties to their stakeholders. Admirable though such efforts may appear, they are founded on a moral misunderstanding. Companies that strive to behave ethically generally ar-

gue that they do so because, in the long run, it is good for business. Most of the time, they are right. Sometimes, indeed, they have little option, because ethical behaviour is what the law demands. In most countries, at least in the rich world, the law discourages companies from lying to customers, cheating their employees, or stealing from taxpayers. The primary moral duties of those who run companies are to obey the law, and to ensure that their employees do too.

Good behaviour may spring from other self-interested motives. For instance, in the United States various laws and court rulings encourage managers to tell employees how to behave ethically and to see that they do so. In addition, it has become more embarrassing to be caught doing something unethical. Non-governmental organisations

fight hard for members and money these days; and they gain good publicity from harrying a company caught doing something questionable. As Shell and Nike can rue-fully attest, being blitzed by NGOs is bad for staff morale, brand strength and the management self-confidence. More fundamentally, a reputation for ethical behaviour may be a competitive advantage. A firm such as Hewlett Packard would argue that it treats employees, suppliers and customers well because to do so attracts good staff, ensures good service and enhances the value of its brands. Trust is valuable — and will grow more so in an electronic world, where buyers and sellers may be geographically far apart.

Such arguments allow companies to say that they are combining virtue with the pursuit of shareholder value.

But what happens when virtue and value clash? Many executives would argue that corporate decisions are rarely black or white. Say a mining company has a joint venture with a state-owned enterprise in a developing country, which does not care about western safety or environmental standards. Does it pull out, knowing that it might be replaced by another company with fewer scruples, or stay put and try to change things?

Yet every executive, every corporate board, at some point faces a decision that does not quite pass the smell test. A drug company offers health officials from developing countries lavish entertainment as an inducement to buy its drugs. A bank tries to coax people on modest incomes to borrow money to

pay for holidays. An internet company sells information gleaned about its customers’ surfing habits without their consent. In each case, the company’s managers can reasonably argue that they are pursuing the interests of shareholders, and not breaking the law. Is this wrong? The question makes it clear why corporate ethics is such a tangle. It is hard to think of companies as moral entities, on a par with human beings. A company has, as someone once said, “No soul to damn, no backside to kick.” It may

have legal obligations that apply to it as an organisation; but it cannot do good or bad without action by the individuals who work for it and own it. In some companies, the corporate culture may be so powerful that it appears to infuse the whole business with a sense of moral values; in others, anything goes. But while the corporate culture may make it easier or harder for people to behave well, it does not mean that the company has an independent moral existence.

Indeed, ethical codes — the real sort, rather than the kind consultants are paid to concoct — are simply too complex and subtle to be applied to companies. This is not merely because moral values are hard to agree upon: who knows what is “fair pay”, or whether pension schemes should treat same-sex couples as though

they were married? It is also because companies cannot love their neighbours, or forgive those that hate them, or even act altruistically. These basic moral tasks are human, not corporate.

Where, then, does that leave the individual manager, torn between his corporate responsibility to shareholders and his conscience? The moral manager applies two tests to any difficult decision. First, how would this look if it were to appear on the front page of a newspaper? And second, will he still be able to look himself in the mirror tomorrow morning without a twinge?

Because companies cannot ask the second question, it is the one that ultimately determines what corporate ethics means.

Frances Cairncross is on the staff of the Economist

Fig. 15 The Guardian. April 21, 2000. ‘Goodness and Greed’

and the entities which are given agency in the text. These include ‘a drug company’, ‘a bank’, ‘an internet company’, ‘Companies’ generally, and the subject pronoun ‘they’, also referring to companies. In other words, companies and company-like entities are given considerable agency within clauses in the text:

- They set up advisory committees ... (19-20)
- ... they write codes of corporate ethics ... (22-23)
- ... they appoint ethics officers ... (23-24)
- A drug company offers health officials from developing countries lavish entertainment as an inducement to buy its drugs. (111-114)
- A bank tries to coax people on modest incomes to borrow money ... (115-117)
- An internet company sells information gleaned about its customers’ surfing habits without their consent. (118-122)
- ... companies want to be seen to be good. They set up advisory committees on social responsibility; they write codes of corporate ethics ... (19-23)
- Companies that strive to behave ethically argue that they do so because, in the long run, it is good for business. (30-31)

If it is agreed that conscious agency is one of the qualities associated with being human, then there seems to be a problem with the way companies are accorded agency in this text. According to the text, companies ‘set up’, ‘write’, ‘appoint’, ‘coax’, ‘sell’, ‘strive’, etc. But despite these cognising qualities the text also argues that companies are not human and therefore cannot make ethical decisions. There appears to be a contradiction here. First, the attribution of agency to companies seems to contradict this reading. Second, it also implies that when companies do act agentially in the text their actions are unrelated to ethics; that, for example, coaxing people to borrow money is not a moral issue. This also seems problematic. According to the terms of the text it is unclear as to why coaxing, buying and selling are not also moral issues. It also seems problematic to the text that companies are able to perform these actions as a matter of course, and yet are unable to display altruism as well. To be entirely consistent with its preferred reading the text should not give any agency to companies at all. It seems that this text has chosen to treat as unproblematic the conventionality of inanimate agency in English and to overlook the impact of this structural incongruity on its overall argument. Whether one believes that companies can be ethical or not, in terms of what the text appears to be saying, if companies can sell, argue, attest, refuse, approach, ask questions, etc., it seems reasonable that they should also be capable of being ethical.

A final point is to recall from Chapter Four (4.3.4; also see 2.2.2) that the deconstructive interpretation is not a necessary outcome of a critical reading. That is, critical work is not predicated upon a deconstruction of the text; the process of descriptive, representative and social interpretation (i.e. discursive mapping) is *already* critical. One crucial effect of this is that text selection in a TACO approach is therefore not primarily determined by considerations of domination, manipulation, obfuscation and control, and this makes it possible to examine texts in a very wide range of genres. I believe this gives the TACO framework a flexibility of use which is particularly suited to educational contexts, especially as no predicating 'agenda' (e.g. Marxist, emancipatory, etc.) is obligated upon teachers and students in the analysis and discussion of texts. In other words, unlike most approaches in CDA where the choice of certain text types is strongly implied, i.e. those which are suspected of harbouring manipulative, discriminatory, mystifying, inculcating or dominating tendencies (cf. Fairclough, 2001: 62; Wallace, 1992, 1995, 2003; Van Dijk, 1993, 2001, 2004), here the choice of text is intentionally left as open as possible, because in the TACO approach *any* text is a potential critical object.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have offered a summary and evaluation of two representative models of critical textual analysis in the traditions of CDA and CLA. Both of these have been influential in developing my own approach to critical reading. In this discussion I have tried to draw attention to a broad range of issues which seem to be problematic to how these operate as educational procedures for critically reading texts. Principal concerns have been the terminological and conceptual complexity of Fairclough's CDA and of the organisational reliance of both his and Wallace's models on an SFL framework as the rationale for their procedural approach to the text. I have also raised a number of questions about the effectiveness of Fairclough's three-dimensional view of discourse as indicating a procedure which is fully centred on the text. In the TACO framework systemic grammar is a linguistic resource rather than an organising principle and each stage is centred on, and anchored by, the text. A further issue is that the TACO framework is conscious of being a framework and approach whose principal concern is *critical* rather than *general* readers. It is therefore not primarily a model of how people come to interpret and understand texts, but a model and rationale for how a text can be read critically which asks the reader to make explicit use of personal knowledge and experience in order to reach an interpretation of a particular text. In other words it is an approach which views critical reading as a *deliberate* and a *deliberating*

practice on the part of the analyst (cf. 4.3.4), rather than one which examines how texts impinge upon processes of discourse interpretation more generally. These are amongst the principal distinguishing features of the TACO framework as compared other existing frameworks in the tradition of CDA.

In the remainder of this chapter the TACO framework has been set out and a rationale for the questions which appear under each stage has been provided. Where relevant this discussion has also given an explanation and justification of the principal concepts and terms which inform different stages. Suggestions have also been made regarding how teachers might approach introducing aspects of the framework to students. The theoretical backdrop to the framework was described in Chapter Four. This showed how the framework is understood as doubling commentary which has been ‘unfolded’ so as to become four stages of interpretation, in which the second, third and fourth stages of the model correspond to the second commentary stage in Derridean and Adornian models of analysis. Accompanying the four stages of the framework is a view of discourse in four dimensions. This illustrates the perspective of discourse which informs this study and indicates how the four stages of the TACO framework intersect with it. This serves as a point of comparison with Fairclough’s three-dimensional model. Both see language as a social practice but with the main difference that the TACO model gives a more explicit impression of the discursive construction of social life and of how *text* and *discourse* are related to one another. It therefore develops Fairclough’s model in a different way, which I believe makes the overall perspective of discourse and of how the framework is constructed clearer to see. Above all it shows how *the procedural framework* and *the text* are much more closely related than they appear to be in Fairclough’s model. This is another of the principal distinguishing features of the TACO approach.

This observation concludes Chapter Five. Chapter Six is the empirical chapter of the thesis and is addressed to practice. It includes empirical classroom data and material which is illustrative of a TACO approach.

Chapter Six

Materials and Methods in the TACO Classroom

6.1 Chapter synopsis

In this chapter classroom data and material exemplifying the TACO approach are presented. These relate to the second research question of this thesis, which asks what the TACO procedure looks like and how it can be used. Chapters Four and Five have contributed to explaining the first part of this question, what the TACO framework looks like. Here in Chapter Six the second part of this research question is addressed, how it is used. In order to do this, the data and the material introduced here are derived from an undergraduate class that I teach at Oxford Brookes University. The class is called *Critical Discourse and the Media* and was introduced in Chapter Three. The discussion in this chapter centres on the transcript of a recorded classroom discussion of a text. The text on which the recorded data is based is introduced in the context of my own TACO reading of it. This serves as an introduction to the text, and as a point of comparison with what the students said about the same text in class. My own analysis of the text is also intended as an illustrative example of how the TACO procedure may be applied to a text. The full class transcript is included in Appendix A.

6.2 TACO in practice: ‘Critical Discourse and the Media’

6.2.1 The nature of the empirical research

The nature of the empirical research of this study was described in Chapter Three. There it was explained that the empirical data is not the product of a formal research design but has resulted from a more unstructured approach which has some features in common with ethnographic research. In transcribing the data for the purposes of discussing it I have opted for a ‘verisimilar’ approach (Denzin, 1997; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). That is, I have sought to render a transcription of the data and a discussion of the classroom interaction which might reasonably be considered accessible, as well as acceptable, to the particular academic community of readers who are likely to read it, i.e. educational practitioners like myself who have an interest in language and discourse. I have also noted that the data is representative of what have been called ‘messy texts’, in being largely exploratory, developmental and textual (Denzin, 1997; Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Exploratory, because one of the reasons for recording and transcribing this data was to learn something about how the procedural framework of this study worked in practice. Developmental, because the data

records some of the successful and the not so successful aspects of how the TACO framework was received and used by the students in this class. Textual, because the data is a written text, and is therefore a representation of an experienced reality, rather a 'replication' or 'reproduction' of the reality itself. Probably the key issue for the discussion of the empirical data is that I am not attempting to construct theory from it (cf. 3.3.1). The principal role of the data, in addition to the factors already mentioned, is to examine how effectively the TACO framework operated in practice and to illuminate relevant aspects of the theorisation of procedure which were presented in Chapter Four. These considerations should also make it possible to identify possible shortcomings of the framework, and throw light on relevant areas of this model which may be in need of revision (see 7.3.1).

6.2.2 *Critical Discourse and the Media: module content*

In Chapter Three the context for the classroom discussion was introduced and described (see 3.3.1). It was noted that *Critical Discourse and the Media* is an undergraduate module which may be taken in the second or third year of a student's programme and is open to a range of undergraduates from different subject areas. These include Linguistics, Literature, and Communication. The class is introductory in that prior knowledge of CDA and of other specific course content is not assumed. In 2003-2004 thirteen students took the module, of which five were non-native speakers of English (3 Italians, 1 Thai, 1 Japanese). The remaining students were from the UK. All the students except one were female, and they were mostly between 19 and 22 years of age. The course was assessed on a 100 per cent coursework basis and class contact was for 3 hours a week. The assessment tasks as well as samples of coursework (two essays and the students' poster commentaries) appear in Appendix C. In order to give an idea of how the module was structured and introduced to the students, *Fig. 1* shows the topics which were covered in each week. Handouts and additional material, as well as a week by week commentary on the module, can be found in Appendix B. For reasons of space, this chapter is confined to the class which occurred in week 5. The topics deserve some preliminary comment. In addition to the critical study of texts, my aim was to give students some overview of how procedurally oriented social theory impacted on the TACO approach, particularly in relation to notions of immanent critique, deconstruction, and what is meant in TACO by a critical practice. It thus seemed right to introduce students to some aspects of the thought which was involved.⁸

⁸ Students who were attracted by the social theory aspects of the course were able to choose an essay question related to this if they wished. See Appendix C.

Fig. 1 Critical Discourse and the Media: Weekly Topics

Week 1	Media culture and the triumph of the spectacle
Week 2	Language, Power and Ideology: Critical Discourse Analysis
Week 3	Social theory and text analysis: Foucault
Week 4	Social theory and text analysis: Adorno and Derrida
Week 5	The public politics of the text: Habermas's public sphere
Week 6	Reading week and poster preparation
Week 7	Case Study: 'I'm a Celebrity' TV Show' ⁹
Week 8	Case Study: Terror War: 9/11 and its aftermath
Week 9	Poster presentations

The class in each week was divided into two parts. In the first part we would discuss any reading which had been set (see Appendix B). These readings included brief extracts from earlier drafts of this study, as well as reading material on CDA (e.g. Fairclough, 1989, 2001) and on social theory more generally (e.g. Best and Kellner, 1991). In the second half of the class we would discuss one or other of the texts which the students had been given the week before and by doing this they were familiarised, little by little, with the different aspects of the TACO procedure. I hoped that after a few weeks the students would then feel reasonably comfortable with using it. This was the main factor in choosing to record the TACO discussion in week 5 because by then the students had been introduced to each of the stages of the framework and the questions which were involved.

The choice of the texts which were discussed in each class were mine although I had requested for students to bring in texts which they had read or seen and which they thought the rest of the group might find interesting. Despite my requests the students relied on me to select the texts we would discuss, so I chose texts which I thought might interest them and promote discussion. These were distributed one week in advance. The texts which were discussed can be found in the week by week summary in Appendix B.

6.2.3 Setting the scene for the classroom data

In week 4 the students had been given two texts and asked to read them, but this time they were asked to take into careful consideration each of the four stages of the TACO framework

⁹ This topic was selected by the students.

while doing so. Week 5 commenced with a discussion of some of Habermas's ideas about the public sphere. I put it to the class that what Habermas was saying was that if we want to develop democratically, and reach a democratic understanding between ourselves, it was important that we talk to one another and that we ask questions about the kind of world we are living in, in relation to the kind of world we might like to live in. So by discussing texts and what texts were doing in the construction and projection of meanings about the world, we were in fact creating a small 'critical publicity' of our own and holding to account the way those meanings were being constructed and used. This was in some ways what all the social theorists we had looked at were saying, that we must always ask questions of the claims contained in the discourse and in the texts which a society produces.

In the second half of this class we discussed a text which appeared in 'GQ Magazine' in November 2003. This text is reproduced in *Fig. 2*. The empirical data is based on the classroom discussion of this text. Prior to discussing the data, I present my own interpretation of this text using the TACO framework. This will help to contextualise the discussion of the data, and also provide a point of comparison between my own interpretation of the text and the students'. In keeping with the perspective of critical reading which has been developed in Chapters Two, Four and Five (cf. 2.3.1; 2.3.2; 4.3.4; 5.2.3; 5.3.3; 5.4) I wish to emphasise that the interpretation which is presented here is a personal interpretation based on my own engagement with this text. I am primarily concerned with how a text can be discussed from the perspective of the critical reader in conjunction with other critical readers, because, as has been noted in Chapters Four and Five (4.3.4 and 5.4), I see critical reading as a *deliberate* and a *deliberating* educational practice, rather than one which is concerned with explaining how general readers might be manipulated (and deceived) by the features which texts contain.

6.2.4 GQ Magazine's 5 Best Business Tools: 'The Glass Ceiling'

The text for week 5 came from the November 2003 edition of 'GQ Magazine', a magazine for young men in their twenties and thirties. GQ Magazine, like other UK based men's magazines of its type is notable for its attention to male fashion and lifestyle, and for the frequent appearance of women on its cover and within the pages of the magazine itself. These are often professional models and 'tabloid celebrities', as well as more internationally famous female performers, such as actresses and pop singers. In general, sex, celebrity, and sexual attraction are major themes.

Fig. 2 GQ Magazine. November, 2003. 'The Glass Ceiling'

£\$ GQ GOES TO WORK ¥£\$ GQ GOES TO WORK ¥£\$ GQ GOES TO WORK ¥£\$ GQ GOES TO

BUSINESS TOOLS



Table by Allen Jones (1969). Allen Jones' new paintings and works on paper will be on show at the Alan Cristea Gallery, London, from 29 October to 22 November. Tel: 020-7439 1866

5 BEST BUSINESS TOOLS

The glass ceiling is an essential item for the businessman. It's corporate DIY with no instruction manual

No 5: The glass ceiling. By Amanda Platell

It's the ultimate psychological floor, there to hold you up, but to keep us women down. The glass ceiling must be strong enough to support a man, transparent enough to see through, yet tough enough to keep a woman out. We call it a ceiling, you call it a floor.

The problem with the glass ceiling is you can't just send your secretary out to buy one. It is still one of the few essential items for the successful businessman that he has to assemble himself; it's corporate DIY with no instruction manual. But fear not, men have an innate instinct for constructing it, an instinct as inalienable as their

passion for strikers and strippers. Erecting a glass ceiling is one thing, maintaining it another. To do so requires vigilance and a fundamental belief that the gentle nature of a woman is better suited to the bedroom than the boardroom, that bonuses are for boys and the fairer sex should never get a fair deal. And if ever you weaken for a moment and wonder if the glass ceiling is really necessary, just try and remember the last time a bloke took a company to court for sexual discrimination. Stick to your guns, boys: in business you can never really trust anyone who has to pee sitting down. ☺

FYI

OFFICE SPACE If your David Brent quotes are getting tired, may we suggest repeated viewings of Mike Judge's *Office Space*. Released to little acclaim in 1999, the *King Of The Hill* creator's corporation comedy has now sold 2.6 million copies on DVD and video. It's *The Office* with an American accent, full of delicious characters such as Michael Bolton ("Why should I change my name? He's the one who sucks"), enforced office jollity (Hawaiian Shirt Fridays, anyone?) and enough direct-hit observations to make the Brentster look like Employee Of The Year. Enjoy. £5.99, www.blackstar.co.uk CM

The GQ text as a critical object

The text is entitled '5 Best Business Tools. No 5: The glass ceiling'. This text formed part of a longer feature in the magazine. Described on the front cover as '30 pages of trade secrets, style tips, office sex and expenses fiddles,' this was an extensive feature covering 65 pages. At least half of these pages were devoted to advertisements aimed at men (e.g. for watches, perfumes, whisky, clothes, sound systems, shoes, credit cards, skin cream, and cameras). The 'Best Business Tools' texts appeared at various points in the feature and were each given a page to themselves. The other 'Business Tools' which appeared in the magazine and their accompanying by-lines were:

1. The lift ('Elevators move the equivalent of the world's population every 72 hours')
2. The photocopier and the water cooler ('Both are epicentres of bonding, brown-nosing, gossip and electric waves of sexual frisson')
3. E-mail ('E-mail has revolutionised the world like nothing else')
4. Mobile phones ('Handsets halve in size every 18 months, which means by 2017 mobiles will have reached the physical boundary of technology')

(From GQ Magazine, November, 2003)

Sex in one form or another was a prominent theme in most of these pieces. Collectively they seemed to be intended as partly humorous and partly informative. The presentational style was 'jokey' and ironic, and each piece incorporated numerous informational facts about the topic. The men and women who were portrayed in the photographs on these pages tended to be stereotyped in terms of appearance (young, good-looking, tall, slim, etc.), and in terms of projected assumptions about male-female attraction, i.e. that life is an elaborate 'mating game', that sexual 'game-playing' in the workplace is a central feature of this; that men and women are equally involved in its rituals, etc. Where these projected assumptions might be construed as 'politically incorrect' or offensive the implied levity of the pieces seemed intended to excuse this. In the following TACO analysis of the text my own comments are interspersed with the stages of the framework and the questions associated each stage. For an explanation of relevant terms see 5.3.3.

5 Best Business Tools. No 5: The glass ceiling

1. Descriptive interpretation

- What is the frame of the text and how does the text look?
- What is the topic?
- How is the topic being presented (e.g. formal, informal, persuasive, aggressive, angry, friendly, humorous, comic, etc.)?
- What is the preferred reading (the main message of the text; the reading which accords with the way the text seems to want to be read; the reading of minimal consensus)?
- Who might be the ideal reader of this text? E.g. A person who ...

Framing the text

The GQ text is an elaborate text. That is, it is not simply a written text on a page, but is a combination of modes of representation. It includes for example, in the lower half of the page, individual pieces of written text, and in the upper half a photograph of a woman represented as a table. The woman is artificial. She is not a real woman but a manikin. For this text I have decided that the following elements constitute the frame for this text. When I refer to the GQ text, I am collectively referring to these elements:

- A picture of 'a table' in which the table is constructed from a lifelike 'dummy' of a partially-clothed woman with a glass table top on her back. The woman is pictured kneeling on a fur rug and looking into a mirror which is lying on the rug.
- The title '5 Best Business Tools' appears as though it were a 'post-it-note' in the lower half of the page.
- Below that there is a by-line stating that 'The glass ceiling is an essential item for the businessman. It's corporate DIY with no instruction manual.'
- To the right of the post-it-note title is another short piece of written text entitled 'No 5: The glass ceiling. By Amanda Platell'. I recognise Platell as being a former public relations consultant to William Hague, the opposition leader of the Conservative Party from 1997-2001. I will refer to this as the 'Platell text'.
- In the top right hand corner of the page is a short text explaining that the picture is of an artistic work from 1969 by an artist called Allen Jones. I will refer to this as the 'Allen Jones text'.

By including these elements I have also excluded some others which also appear on the same page. In the bottom right hand corner I am excluding the written text which is bounded by two red lines. I will call this the 'FYI text'. I have not included the FYI text because it is not about 'the glass ceiling' but is an advertisement for a video called 'Office Space'. I have also

not included the 'GQ GOES TO WORK' banner which is repeated between yen, pound and dollar symbols at the top of the page, or the written text in the top left hand corner in which 'BUSINESS TOOLS' is written in block capitals along the side of the page. I have also left out the page number, GQ logo and date which appear in the border at the foot of the page. These are either marginal features of this page or, in the case of the FYI text, are not of direct relevance to the topic.

With regard to how the GQ text looks, in addition to the various pictorial and written elements which have been mentioned, the text makes use of colour and contrasting fonts and font sizes. These seem to add contrast and vibrancy to the design of the page. The GQ text also simulates handwriting via the written text of the 'post-it-note' and the suggestive circling in red of the written text underneath it. It is as though someone has independently added these elements to the page and this has the effect of suggesting that the text as a whole is important or significant in some way; i.e. the text is for filing and 'further reference'.

The topic

The topic of the GQ Text is given as 'the glass ceiling', a euphemism for the invisible barrier which, in western societies, is widely considered to prevent women from advancing up the career and salary ladder in the same way as men. More generally the topic is discrimination against women in the workplace. The presentation of the topic, from the information contained in the Platell text, and the other elements around it, seems ironic. It seems intended to be interpreted as amusing.

The preferred reading and the reading position

My view of the preferred reading is largely influenced by the Platell text, as the most developed instance of written text on the page, and how this is juxtaposed with the other written and visual elements of the wider text: the '5 Best Business Tools' on the post-it-note, and the short text below this referring to the glass ceiling as 'an essential item for the businessman,' and the photograph of the woman as a table. The Platell text together with these other elements presents what is intended to be a humorous (and titillating) representation of sexual discrimination against women in the workplace, but one which partly acknowledges that it is also a serious matter. The idea that sexual discrimination in the workplace is a serious issue (i.e. unjust to women) depends on the cultural recognition of the use of irony in the GQ text. That is, on understanding that the propositions included in the

text are not meant to be taken literally. For example, that the glass ceiling is ‘one of the few essential items for the successful businessman’ (Platell text, Col. 1), that ‘you can never really trust anyone who has to pee sitting down’ (Platell text, Col. 2), that the glass ceiling really is one of ‘5 Best Business Tools’ (post-it-note).

If I put myself in the position which I imagine is the intended reading position for the GQ text, i.e. the position in which the preferred reading seems most explicit, it seems that while the more serious point about sexual discrimination will be understood, it is also part of the preferred reading that this is of little consequence, and that if the reader is able to gain pleasure from this depiction of such discrimination, this is much more important than the discrimination itself and any offence this depiction might cause to others. The preferred reading also includes the potential of a much more literal reading of the text in which the point about sexual discrimination is dismissed, the offence to ‘politically correct’ liberals and feminists is welcomed, and deep-seated prejudices are confirmed. In these circumstances a (male) reader might recognise the irony for what it is, but still agree for example with the misogyny of the text. The Platell text seems to be forcefully implicated in doing this, regardless of whether this was the writer’s intention or not.

The ideal reader

In my view the ideal reader of the GQ text is male for the main reason that the preferred reading does not seem one that is likely to appeal to most women. This is despite the recognised possibility that the Platell text can be read as presenting an implied critique of the glass ceiling which might appeal to female readers. It is an implied critique because at no point is the sexual discrimination which the glass ceiling represents explicitly condemned by Platell, quite the contrary in fact. On the basis that the writer would presumably not wish to be interpreted as ‘damning her own sex’ (cf. class transcript: line 493), it seems more likely that her comments about the usefulness of the glass ceiling, and about women more generally, are not intended to be interpreted literally, but are supposed to be veiled criticisms of an unjust and discriminatory state of affairs. It also seems reasonable to assume that if Amanda Platell is indeed the author of the Platell text, and was commissioned to write it, she would have been aware of what magazine it was to appear in and in what context, i.e. as one of five ironically humorous pieces on ‘business tools’ for men. What she may not have been aware of is how her text would be incorporated by the editors and page designers of GQ magazine into the wider textual frame of the page in which it appears and what this would

include. This, in my view, has the effect of rendering largely mute the oppositional reading which the Platell text might have more readily implied if it had been juxtaposed with alternative textual elements to the ones which are on this page.

2. Interpretation of representative features of the text

- What social values can be attached to the discourse features of the text (image/ vocabulary/grammar/genre)?

Image

1. How is the text organised visually? E.g. is it in columns or is it a single block of text? Are words written in different sized fonts?
2. Does the text use words and pictures? If so, what is the balance between words and pictures? Where are words and pictures in relation to one another?
3. If the text is a combination of visual and written modes, or is written in a variety of formats, what is on the left (in the GIVEN position)? What is on the right (in the NEW position)? What is located in the upper part of the text (in the IDEAL position)? What is located in the lower part of the text (in the REAL position)?
4. What are the effects of these choices on the text?

Image

Some elements of the visual dimension of the GQ text have already been noted under the descriptive interpretation (cf. 5.3.3). The aim at this stage is to consider these features in more detail. The main written component of the GQ text is the Platell text. This is divided into two neat columns. The neat visual ordering of the Platell text, and the fact that it is the most extended piece of written text on the page, gives the Platell text added significance. The message to the reader is that this text *should be read*. The arrangement of the GQ text is significant for where different elements of the text have been positioned. The picture dominates the top ‘ideal’ dimension of the text, and the written elements dominate the ‘real’ (see 5.3.3). The picture is an erotic representation of a woman wearing high-heeled boots, black leather gloves, and a corset. This wardrobe is suggestive of the fetishism and domination fantasies of some males (and females), except here in a possible inversion of this idea, it is the woman who is being dominated by being also represented as a table. It seems likely that the erotic aspects of the representation of the woman in this picture are intended to appeal to male rather than female readers of the text.

In the real dimension of the text ‘5 Best Business Tools’ is presented as though it were handwritten on a post-it-note. To exaggerate this impression the bottom right hand corner of the note is turned up as though someone has come by and stuck this note onto the page. The

handwrittenness of the note contrasts with the typed layout of the Platell text and suggests realism. The post-it-note is also in the 'given' and the Platell text is in the 'new'. This might be interpreted as saying that it is given that the joke topic is 'Best Business Tools' and what the Platell text is saying is new. The penned circle below the post-it-note was mentioned above. It is the type of penned circle that people employ when they are browsing the small ads sections of newspapers and record an item as something worth returning to.

In the top right hand corner of the page there is a small text explaining the provenance of the table in the picture, the Allen Jones text. The content of this text is unrelated to the topic of discrimination in the workplace and this may be why it is located in the ideal rather than in the real; i.e. it is not part of the main message of the text. Related to this is that in contrast to the other written elements which stand out from the page (black on yellow, red on blue), the Allen Jones text is in a black font set against a dark grey background. This has the effect of marginalising the Allen Jones text in relation to the GQ text as a whole. Perhaps this is intentional on the part of the page designer of GQ magazine so that our attention is deflected away from it. We are meant to understand that it is less important than other aspects of the page.

The main effect of the image choices on the GQ text is to eroticise it because of the way the semi-naked image of the woman dominates the page. The other effect also relates to layout. This is that at first sight it is unclear how the erotic image of the woman in the ideal should be interpreted in relation to the '5 Best Business Tools' in the given/real dimension of the text. Indeed, at first glance, this juxtaposition seems to suggest that a woman's 'ideal' role 'as a business tool' is to be a dominated sexual object. The social values of the image features of the text on the whole do not seem complimentary to women, but are denigrating and sexist.

Vocabulary and grammar

Vocabulary

1. What kind of vocabulary is used in the text? E.g. formal/informal, positive/negative, casual/dramatic, emotional/serious.
2. What semantic fields (word families) do vocabulary choices belong to?
3. What vocabulary is associated with the participants in the text? Do these choices create a particular impression of the participants?
4. Is there any vocabulary which seems very important?
5. What words are given capital letters, italicised, underlined, put in inverted commas?
6. What are the effects of these choices on the text?

Grammar

1. What tenses are used in the text? Do any of these seem very important?
2. Does the text use 'we', 'you' or 'I'? When and how does the text use them?
3. Are there any nominalisations in the text? (E.g. words that end in '-ation', '-ition', '-ience', '-ness', '-ment'). When are they used?
4. When are active and passive constructions used? Are there any common themes attached to the use of these different voices? What is usually foregrounded or backgrounded in these constructions? Are the agents animate or inanimate?
5. In the text as a whole which information is put first? What is thematised?
6. What are the effects of these choices on the text?

The Allen Jones text which accompanies the photograph is quite formal in style and seems typical of the art gallery notices in the 'What's On' sections of entertainment guides. This is because it simply states where and when Allen Jones' work will be on show. The Allen Jones text might be interpreted as giving the rest of the GQ text a veneer of respectability. More substantial in terms of vocabulary and grammar is the Platell text. This is written in a fairly informal style. For example it starts with a contraction ('It's') and uses colloquialisms like 'Stick to your guns, boys', 'bonuses are for the boys' and 'bloke' (column 2). This use of boys is suggestive of 'schoolboys' and 'fooling around'. It is 'boys' who are the jokers, and who are more impulsive and take risks. There is a sense of 'reader-familiarity' in this usage. The tone is comradely. This impression is reinforced by the number of personal references to a male reading audience.

- ... there to hold **you** up, but to keep us women down ... (Col. 1)
- We call it a ceiling **you** call it a floor. (Col. 1)
- The problem with the glass ceiling is that **you** just can't send **your** secretary out to buy one (Col. 1)
- And if **you** ever weaken for a moment ... (Col. 2)
- Stick to **your** guns, boys: in business **you** can never really trust anyone who has to pee sitting down. (Col. 2)

From the use of pronouns in these passages the Platell text seems to be addressed to a male readership, rather than to a female one. The use of personal pronominal reference to male readers seems to increase the complicity of the Platell text in the preferred reading of the wider text. The Platell text thus finds itself in the position of playing an affirming role in relation to the preferred reading, one which may run counter to the (female) author's intent. The 'affirming sexism' of the Platell text is reinforced by its presentation of men. These include reference to men as possessors:

- you can't just send *your secretary* out to buy one
- men *have* an innate instinct
- bonuses are *for* the boys
- stick to *your* guns

... and as having certain stereotypical characteristics:

- innate instinct
- passion for strikers and strippers
- vigilance
- fundamental belief
- bonuses

On the one hand, from a perspective which is more favourable to Platell, these references can be interpreted as a satire on male stereotypes and are therefore at the expense of men. On the other hand, if the ideal reader of the GQ text is a male who enjoys 'politically incorrect' jokes at the expense of women, it seems likely that this reader would interpret these as qualities to be proud of rather than as veiled criticisms of an undesirable world view. The Platell text therefore does little more than reaffirm this view.

Looking more closely at the grammatical features of the Platell text, there are many instances of the present simple tense. These uses make the text seem emphatic and truthful.

- It's the ultimate psychological floor, there to hold you up, but to keep us women down.
- We call it a ceiling, you call it a floor.
- It is one of the few essential items for the successful businessman that he has to assemble himself. (Col. 1)
- Men have an innate instinct for constructing it, an instinct as inalienable as their passion for strikers and strippers. (Cols. 1-2)
- ... the gentle nature of women is better suited to the bedroom than the boardroom, that bonuses are for the boys and that the fairer sex should never get a fair deal. (Col. 2)
- ... in business you can never really trust anyone who has to pee sitting down. (Col. 2)

The Platell text is also entirely in the active voice. This adds a sense of conviction to the text. It also makes the following themes prominent:

1. The glass ceiling and its effectiveness as a barrier to female promotion
 - ... the glass ceiling must be strong enough ... tough enough ...
 - It is still one of the few essential items ...
 - ... it's corporate DIY with no instruction manual ...
 - ... the problem with the glass ceiling ...
 - ... Erecting a glass ceiling ...
2. The actions and beliefs of men
 - ... men have an innate instinct for constructing it, an instinct as inalienable as their passion for strikers and strippers ...
 - ... the gentle nature of a woman is better suited to the bedroom than the boardroom ...
 - ... bonuses are for the boys ...
 - ... the fairer sex should never get a fair deal

In the GQ text as a whole the following overarching themes can also be identified:

- Women as sex objects (photograph and Platell text)
- Men as dominant over women (photograph, post-it-note, by-line, Platell text)

Genre

1. To what genre does the text belong? (advertisement, news report, narrative, political statement, notice etc?). Is there mixing of genres?
2. If there is mixing of genres, what are the effects of these choices on the text?

In the GQ text there seems to be a mixing of genres. On the one hand the GQ text conforms to a 'general interest' magazine article genre. The inclusion of the picture of the partially clothed woman, which is ostensibly an artistic/political element, seems in this context less artistic or political, than erotic. The text as a whole therefore mixes a 'general interest' magazine article genre with some elements of a pornography genre. Like the Platell text, the possible original purpose of Allen Jones's work, e.g. as a political statement about discrimination against women, seems to have been subverted by its incorporation into a magazine in which sexual images of women are a common theme.

3. The social interpretation

These observations lead us to the third stage of the framework, the social interpretation (cf. 4.3.4, 5.3.3). This involves two questions:

- What social frameworks is the text a part of (e.g. gender, race, economy, business, politics, family, class, income, age, sex, property, geography etc)?
- What typical kinds of social knowledge do these frameworks suggest?

We saw in Chapter Five that with these questions the reader is being asked what aspects of lifeworld knowledge are brought to mind by their reading of the text. In this study I have used the terms lifeworld frames and lifeworld scripts to classify this knowledge (cf. 5.3.3). Lifeworld frames refer to social knowledge frameworks in the lifeworld, and lifeworld scripts to the typical knowledge characteristics and social practices which we associate with them. The GQ text seems to contain the following principal lifeworld frames:

- Capitalist corporate business practices
- Sexual discrimination in the workplace
- Women as fetishised sex objects
- Male juvenility
- Abstract/modern art

These frames suggest the following kinds of lifeworld scripts:

Frame: Capitalist corporate business practices

Script: The capitalist economic organisation of society is given. The main principle of capitalistic working practices is to make as much money as possible. Personal wealth creation is legitimate.

Frame: Sexual discrimination in the workplace

Script: Systematic sexual discrimination against women in the workplace is common. One aspect of this discrimination is that women are not paid as much as men for doing the same work. Some people (feminists, socialists, liberals, etc.) believe that this is wrong.

Frame: Women as sex objects

Script: Women are sexual fantasy objects, and in this role the main purpose of a woman is to excite a man sexually. Woman portrayed as sex objects will often wear sexually provocative clothing, footwear, and other accoutrements which have high sexual symbolic value. Men find this form of eroticism stimulating.

Frame: Men as juvenile and immature

Script: It is a feature of our society that men often do not 'grow up', they remain 'boys'. Men are practical jokers, and can be immature and impulsive. Conversely, women are more sensible, more mature and less impulsive than men.

Frame: Abstract/modern art (or design) as unconventional and 'strange'

Script: Modern art is not like traditional art, e.g. painted landscapes, lifelike portraits and sculptures. Modern art is 'bizarre' and uses unconventional materials, methods and representations.

4. The deconstructive interpretation

Having worked through the first three stages of the framework we now need to consider whether from our accumulated perceptions across the three stages of the framework there seems to be collective warrant for a deconstructive interpretation of the (GQ) text. The textual warrant for a deconstructive interpretation depends upon the critical reader's response to the final question of the framework:

- Does any aspect of the text's internal structure (descriptive, representative, social) appear to contradict or undermine the text's preferred reading?

I have drawn attention to a preferred reading of the GQ text in which sexual discrimination is recognised as probably unfair and unjust to women, but also relatively unimportant because the main purposes of the text are to exploit this for humour and to titillate the reader. There also seems to be a deliberate intention in the cumulative design and representation of the GQ text to be 'politically incorrect'. This carries the implication that one element of the preferred reading is to distinguish the ideal reader from people such as liberals and feminists who might be offended by this representation. In other words, it seems to be part of the preferred reading that the reader detects an intention to show disapproval of such persons, and to suggest that they are perhaps over-sensitive and too serious for their own good. A further implication is that the injustice of sexual discrimination in the workplace seems given. We need not concern ourselves with it because it is not part of the interest of the text (or of the ideal reader) to deal with this issue with any seriousness. Finally, the ideal reader has been identified as someone who might enjoy 'politically incorrect' jokes at the expense of women. It therefore seems unlikely that this reader is intended to reflect in any serious way on the possible reading of the Platell text that the glass ceiling is unjust and a creation of corporate male sexism.

Because of this the Platell text is only minimally in conflict with the overall preferred reading. This conflict is further diminished, and I believe overturned, because the reading in which sexual discrimination in the workplace is opposed relies on an interpretation of the Platell text in which statements such as 'It is still one of the few essential items for the successful businessman', 'bonuses are for the boys', and 'in business you can never really trust anyone who has to pee sitting down' *must not be interpreted literally*. I have suggested that this reading is undermined by being incorporated into the wider design of the GQ text. This undermining of the Platell text's opposition to the glass ceiling, and the augmentation of

the topic's incidental and surrogate role as a carrier of humour and titillation is reinforced by the fact that Platell only implies opposition to the glass ceiling, she does not state it.

My first inclination when I read the GQ text in preparation for the class in week 5 was to point to a deconstructive interpretation in which the injustice of sexual discrimination against women is undermined by the combination of features which make up the text. This deconstructive perspective, as will be seen, comes through in my own contributions in the transcription of the class discussion. In this wider context Platell seems to have 'sold out' and to be 'damning her own sex' (see lines 493 and 511 of the transcript). I now see that it is not the preferred reading of the GQ text *as a whole* which is deconstructed but the preferred reading which seems, on a more favourable reading, to be intended by Platell, i.e. that the glass ceiling is an unjust phenomenon created and maintained by corporate male sexists. The preferred reading of the GQ text as a whole is *not deconstructed* by its immanent features but is in fact affirmed by them, and most of all by the Platell text itself. In other words, in terms of its preferred reading, the GQ text 'says' what it seems to intend to say.

6.2.5 The classroom data: discussion of the GQ text

In this section I present a discussion of the recorded classroom data from week 5 of the class. The full numbered transcript appears in Appendix A. Nine students attended. All of them were female. Of these, five were native speakers of English from the UK (Lottie, Mo, Mary, Kate and Susan) two were from Italy (Carla and Paola), one was from Thailand (Alice), and one was from Japan (Natsuko). In the commentary which follows the numbers that are given in brackets refer to line numbers in the transcript in Appendix A. I have used the following key for the transcription:

Transcription key

...	A brief pause (approx. 1.0 - 2.0 seconds)
[Pause 4.0]	A pause of approximately 4.0 seconds
(unclear)	What was said is indistinguishable from the tape
(Laughter)	Students laugh
/ tuf /	phonemic transcription of what is heard on the tape.
[1A]	Items in square brackets have been introduced into the transcription. They are not recorded on the tape.

Part 1: The initial discussion

This part of the class begins with me asking which text of the two texts distributed in week 4 the students want to discuss. Kate suggests the GQ text (3) and this is generally agreed. The class exchanges which follow this (lines 4-40) were largely spontaneous responses to Kate's

suggestion. By this I mean that at this stage students spoke largely without initiation from me. Throughout the classroom sessions I had made an effort to allow students to speak without directing their exchanges. I was conscious of not wanting to take an overly directive role in the development of the classroom discussion, although I also knew that as the teacher I would probably need (as well as be expected) to ‘scaffold’ the discussion as it proceeded. In my own mind the scaffold for this class would largely be provided by the stages of the TACO framework. I therefore allowed discussion to proceed, as far as possible, in a manner which was not dependent on frequent interventions from me. By now students had become accustomed to the discursive and ‘constellatory’ nature of the classroom sessions and most seemed to have the confidence to feel able to make spontaneous contributions to discussion.

(1-39)

JOR: So you had ... you had ...two texts last week. Um which one shall we look at, which one shall we look at now?

Kate: The GQ one [general murmurings of agreement]

JOR: Yeah? How does everybody feel about that?

Mary: I’ve done it twice now ... (unclear) ... and I still don’t get it. I know it’s about sexism and ...

Lottie: I had to read it about three times before I understood it.

JOR: You had to read it about three times?

Mo: Yeah that whole thing about ‘you call it a floor, we call it a ceiling’ whatever, it just kept going on and on about that and um well ... It just seemed completely um ...

Lottie: It’s really nothing to do with ... (unclear) ...

Mo: ... pointless.

Lottie: It’s all about ...

Mo: ... keeping women under control ... Yeah.

Lottie: Actually, because I didn’t even read that it was a woman writing it ...

Mo: Yeah, I know ...

Lottie: I pounced right in and I thought oh it’s a ... guy.

Mo: It sounds really like blokeish and ‘keep the women down’ and that sort of thing ... and it’s written by a woman. So ... isn’t that completely contradictory?

Mary: Is she being quite sarcastic ... (unclear)?

Mo: Yeah ... I wasn’t sure about that, but then what would be the point ... because it’s a men’s magazine ... so what would be the point of her being sarcastic towards ... that wouldn’t really uh apply to the readers ... the audience, would it? Though I wasn’t sure.

Lottie: Is it a real sort of ... (unclear) ... a real uh everything sort of ...

Mo: Yeah I want ... it's FHM. GQ yeah it's like uh FHM and that kind of thing.

JOR: Say that again ... It's sort of who?

Mo: It's ... its like FHM and stuff like that.

Kate: Yeah I think so.

Susan: The lads' magazine.

All: Yeah.

JOR: I didn't catch the first point.

All: FHM.

Mary: Have you never read FHM?

JOR: FA Chairmen?

Kate: Yeah ... FHM. (Laughter)

JOR: Oh ... I was thinking Football Association Chairmen ... (Laughter) ... FHM

... yes ... yes ... I am with you now ... sorry.

Mary, Lottie and Mo all seem to have found the text puzzling, mainly because of the conflict which exists for them between what the text appears to be saying about the topic and the apparent significant involvement of a woman writer in saying this. Mary and Lottie both say that they had to read it more than once, and Mary says she is still not sure she understands it. Mo suggests that it is all about 'keeping women under control' (15) and Lottie makes the observation that she did not realise at first that the Platell text was written by a woman: 'I pounced right in and I thought oh it's a ... guy' (18). Mo agrees (17-20): 'Yeah, I know ... It sounds really blokeish and 'keep the woman down' and she finds this 'completely contradictory' (20). These impressions seem to accord with my own view of the Platell text as easily prone to a literal interpretation. Their point is that if you did not know it was a woman writing, you would think the Platell text had been produced by a man. Mary suggests that the text is being 'sarcastic' (21). By this she seems to mean that it is not supposed to be read literally but as a coded critique of corporate male sexism. Mo says that she had thought about this but nevertheless finds it difficult to understand how this could be meaningful for the readers of GQ magazine, who she identifies as men:

(22-25)

Mo: Yeah ... I wasn't sure about that, but then what would be the point ... because it's a men's magazine ... so what would be the point of her being sarcastic towards ... that wouldn't really uh apply to the readers ... the audience, would it? Though I wasn't sure.

In other words, Mo cannot see the point of writing such a text if it is only going to be read by men. This comment implies that for Mo the text is without value if it is not to be read by women. Male GQ readers, in her view it seems, would not understand the criticisms which the Platell text implies. The risk is that they will read it affirmatively as showing approval of a sexist attitude towards women. From her comments Mo already seems to have good intuitive impression of the type of reader who might read the GQ text. This is indicative of her conception of an **ideal reader** for the text, of which the Platell text is one element. Her initial view, and that of Lottie, is that the Platell text is reinforcing the impression that the GQ text is written for men. The problem which they are having is that they recognise Amanda Platell as a woman and this creates a conflict in their minds regarding the intended role of her text in this feature.

Mo also comments that she is not sure about what she has said about the Platell text (23). This suggests that she wants some confirmation of her opinion, probably from me the teacher, as she is concerned that she might be wrong. Mo's concern seems to be related to the fact that this discussion is occurring in a pedagogic context. It is a function of such contexts that it is often assumed (by teachers as well as students) that there are correct answers to the issues and questions raised in them. Mo therefore indicates an expectation and an acceptance that she might be told that she is wrong. There are one or two other incidences in the course of this session of students suggesting an expectation of being corrected (e.g. Kate, line 200). Although this may be considered a normal aspect of many classroom discussions, it indicates in the context of this study that Mo and some other students may not have come to terms with the TACO perspective that it is their interpretations which are the most important aspects of the reading, rather than there being a specifically correct interpretation or reading. Another possibility is that they do realise this, but are also responding to the teacher-student power relationship which is a feature of all pedagogic contexts (cf. 4.4.3).

The identification of 'GQ' as a men's magazine leads to comparisons with another magazine called FHM and a brief exchange about the content of these magazines.

(40-46)

Lottie: It's all sort of compiled with really weird non-important facts and like ... really random ... (unclear) ... information.

Mo: Yeah ... like um weird injuries.

Kate: Oh yeah ... things like that yeah and uh cars ...

Mary: ... and boobs.

Mo: Yes ... most importantly ... Yeah.

Lottie: Ten times better than girls' magazines.

The genre is therefore a recognisable one. The students seem to be familiar with the kind of magazines of which GQ is an example: what these magazines write about, the type of readers they are aimed at, and so on. Lottie then makes the observation that these magazines are 'ten times better than girls' magazines' (46). Lottie, Mo, Mary and Kate are all critical of women's magazines which according to them are obsessed about appearance, dieting, and how to attract men (46-91).

(46-91)

Lottie: Ten times better than girls' magazines.

Mary: Can't take much more ... (unclear).

JOR: They're better than girls' magazines?

Lottie: Yeah, they're so much more practical. Well look ... they have silly things but they have practical things as well.

Mo: Yeah ... they are funny.

Lottie: Because mainly in girls magazines ...

Mary: Like 'how to look pretty' ... 'what to eat' ...

(Laughter ... many voices at once - indistinguishable)

Lottie: All the same stuff.

Mo: It's like 'make sure you get a husband before you're thirty' ... that kind of thing ... (Laughter)

Lottie: ... whereas lads' magazines have really practical things.

JOR: Like what?

Lottie: It's like they're ... (unclear) ... with a lot more practical ... (unclear) ...

JOR: uh uh ... Do you feel ...

Susan: ... dying ... like how many people die from being left-handed a year in America and stupid facts like that (Laughter).

Lottie: It is ... it's a real mix of ... and then they've got really practical things about ... There's a lot about ... um ... say men's health ... like um practical keep fit things instead of just ordinary stuff.

Mo: Mm ... like there's a brand new diet that guarantees you can lose five stone in a week or something ... that's always ... (unclear) ...

JOR: And sorry, that's in what kind of magazine?

Mo: In women's magazines ... the new diet where you can eat all the cake you want ... lose five stone.

JOR: Now I take it you're not too ... you don't seem too um enamoured or taken with the girls' magazines.

Mo: Well, they're all the same. It's all like how to get a guy and how to lose weight and how to look like this and how to do this ...

Kate: That is what most girls are interested in to be honest. It's a little bit superficial but ...

JOR: Is it?

Kate: It comes down to women really.

Mary: There's no naked men ... (unclear) ...

Lottie: There aren't people interested in other things because that is what they are fed about women.

Kate: Yeah ... probably. [Pause 4.0]

JOR: OK ... Well ... Thank you ... that ... that um ... contextualises the text very well I think ... um ... so ... what I suggest we do now is ... if you in little groups ... um would like to just discuss your ... your reactions to this text ... in terms of TACO ... as we called it. Just what are your ... what are your impressions and uh what sort of things from doing your analysis are relevant here? So if we do that for a few minutes and then we can feed back to the class ... Is that all right ... yes? So you three are going to work together. You two ... and you ... you four together? Yes probably you four together. Is that all right?

By allowing the discussion to develop of its own accord my aim was to generate some interest in the GQ text, and to warm them to the topic. After Kate speaks there is a four second pause and this signals to me that the students' preliminary discussion has reached a conclusion. I decide that now would be a good time for them to go into groups to discuss the text in more detail according to the main areas of the TACO framework, and this is what I ask them to do. I have assumed that they have all read the GQ text, and that they have attempted to apply the framework to it in some way.

If we reflect on this first stage of the class a little more, some initial points can be made. First, it seems apparent that at least some of the students, e.g. Kate, Mo, Lottie, and Paola, are very much at ease discussing their different initial perspectives of the GQ text in front of the class as a whole. This observation is relevant to the Habermasian 'conditions of discussion' which in Chapter Four (4.4.2) were described as applying to critical discussion in the TACO classroom. These were:

1. Discussants are bound by institutional norms of constraint; these include a disregard for social status between discussants, a respect for rights of participation, and the expectation of intersubjective communication;
2. A critical discussion involves the problematisation of areas that are not usually questioned;
3. A critical discussion illuminates some aspect of perceived reality from the perspective of different discussants; a critical discussion is a constellation of views;
4. The object of a critical discussion is a text;
5. A critical discussion is, in principle, open to anyone; a critical discussion is inclusive.

The second, third and fourth principles are evidenced by the class discussion of the GQ text itself. With regard to the first and the fifth principles, in this class the institutional norms of constraint which apply are evidenced by the recognition of the pedagogic context in which the students are participating and of the teacher-student power relation which informs it. In addition to Mo's comment which is discussed above, it is notable here and in the rest of the transcript that in addition to contributing to the more general discussion, as 'the teacher' I will intervene to ask questions, to seek clarification, and to summarise what is being said. I also exercise my control over the class by intervening in order to change the focus of the discussion, or to suggest that it is time to move to a new question or issue. That is, I frame the different stages of the class. For example, lines 84-91 begin with this type of 'framing move' (cf. Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975):

JOR: OK ... Well ... Thank you ... that ... that um ... contextualises the text very well I think ... um ... so ... what I suggest we do now is if you in little groups ... um would like to just discuss your ... your reactions to this text ... in terms of TACO ... as we called it.

The first condition of discussion also indicates that there should be a disregard for social status between discussants, a respect for each discussant's rights of participation, and the expectation of intersubjective communication. Over the preceding weeks I had encouraged students to treat the class as discursive, i.e. as a place where they could discuss their opinions and their interpretations of texts and also of the thinkers which we were studying. By week 5 this had led to fairly open discussions, with students readily talking and responding to one another. It was therefore implied in the conduct of the class that students should expect

intersubjective communication (i.e. discussion) to be a significant feature of it and that all students, as far as the circumstances of the class were concerned, had the same rights of participation. But as will become apparent as the rest of the class unfolds some students do not speak at all in open-class discussion. For example, in relative order of contributions on the tape, Lottie and Mo speak the most, followed by Kate and Paola, and then Susan and Mary. Thus although all students in the class had the same rights of participation, some students chose not to exercise these rights, although they did speak within their groups. That these students do not participate in open class can only be speculated upon. Natsuko and Alice for example were from Japan and Thailand respectively where the educational culture is very different to the UK, and where the expectation in academic contexts tends to be for students to be silent unless asked a direct question by the teacher (see also O'Kelly, 1982; Tannen and Saville-Troike, 1985; Jaworski, 1993). My wish not to direct students to speak therefore probably militated against these students' participation in open-class discussion. However, if I had intervened to force these students to speak this might be perceived as being in contravention of Habermas's conception of the public sphere as a place where individuals may 'deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion' (Habermas, 1989b: 231).

In relation to a disregard for social status between participants, the participation of students in open-class discussion does not seem characterised by an awareness of status differentials, at least as equal members of the class. That is, they are all students studying the same module, and they have all had equal rights of access to it (cf. Habermas 1989a: 231). On the other hand, it is likely that the students come from different social backgrounds, although what these are is not known. In any case, they do not seem relevant here. More salient perhaps is that the class is made up of native and non-native speakers of English, and it is the former who do most of the talking. In this light, the silence of Carla, Alice and Natsuko may be construed as indicating some form of status differential existing within the class between the speakers of English as a first language and at least some of the students who speak it as a second language. Carla, Alice and Natsuko may feel less confident about expressing themselves in this context, and so choose not to speak except in their group. In these circumstances the principle that there should be a disregard for status differentials between individuals would seem to be idealised (see 4.4.2: 122). On the other hand, this observation probably applies to all the conditions of discussion. It is primarily for this reason that they have been presented as guidelines (see 4.4.2: 124).

Part 2: Groupwork on the GQ text

In the groupwork stage of the class Mo and Susan form one group, Carla, Paola, Natsuko and Alice form another, and Mary, Kate and Lottie form a third. After twenty minutes have passed I ask if the students are ready to talk about the GQ text again. I have allowed twenty minutes for group discussion because I want them to have time to exchange their views about the text based on their reading of the GQ text over the previous week in conjunction with the framework. To assist the discussion I have written the headings of the four stages of the framework on the board. I explain to the class that I have put them on the board so that I can take notes of what they say as we go along.

(95-109)

JOR: OK ... so um ... are we ready to discuss this ... yes? What I have done is I've put these [the four stages of TACO] on the board up here so that we can take notes while we're going along. I wonder if anybody'd volunteer to copy whatever I put up there onto a piece of paper, so that I could have a copy at the end?

Mary: Yes, I will.

JOR: Will you? Is that OK? Thanks ...[Pause 3.0] ... OK ... so GQ magazine.

Mo ... what did you say GQ stood for?

Mo: I think it's 'Gentleman's Quarterly'.

JOR: OK ... I didn't know that.

Kate: It makes sense though, doesn't it? I can't think of what else it might be.

Lottie: It really defines who the reader is supposed to be I think ... It's ... (unclear)

...

Mo: Or it's ironic.

JOR: But it isn't a quarterly is it? It's a monthly. Is it bi-monthly or monthly?

Mo: No ... monthly I think ... yeah ... yeah probably ... It says GQ November.

I had overheard Mo mention to Susan that 'GQ' stood for 'Gentleman's Quarterly' and I ask her to repeat this for the others in the class (101). Lottie says that 'It really defines who the reader is supposed to be I think' (105), whereas Mo suggests it might be ironic (108). Lottie's observation is noteworthy for its apparent reconfirmation of the ideal reader as being male. When Mo says it is ironic it is not clear what she means by this. It may be that she does not think of GQ readers as 'gentlemen', i.e. as cultured or civilised individuals, or she may mean that it is some kind of joke, as it is not a quarterly magazine.

Part 3: Discussing the text using the TACO framework

After one or two more comments about the meaning of ‘GQ’ I try to move the discussion towards the TACO framework.

(111-121)

Mo: It says GQ November.

JOR: Oh yeah ...I haven’t bought it since ... I promise. Anyway ... um ... so you had a look at it ... and you tried to look at it in terms of the procedure ... did you find the procedure ... how did you find the procedure to use? Did you find it ...

Lottie: The questions are a bit [Sounds like / tuf / = tough?]

JOR: Yeah?

Kate: Some of them are quite similar though.

JOR: Hm hm?

[Students talk over one another. Unclear; but Lottie seems to say ‘... overlaps between the representative (unclear) and the social’]

JOR: OK.

Lottie says that the questions are a bit ‘tough’ (115). Kate says that some of the questions seem ‘quite similar’ (117). I decide not to respond to this but to let them continue talking. The tape becomes a little unclear at this point because the students are all talking at the same time, but Lottie can be heard saying something like: ‘overlaps between the representative and the social’ (119-20). She then gives an example.

(122-130)

Lottie: Like questions ... um ... ‘what social values can be attached to the discourse features’ ... ‘what conceptual frameworks is the text a part of?’

JOR: Hm hm ... hm hm ...

Lottie: Things like that.

JOR: OK ... OK ... yes ... I see what you mean ... [Pause 3.0] ... OK fine, well let’s see how we get on anyway. So we start off with the description of the text ... um ... what did ... what did your group have to say ... Lottie ... Kate ...

Lottie: Well really like ...

JOR: ... Mary ...?

I decide not to deal with these problems, but to wait and see how the discussion and use of the framework develops. I am not too concerned that Lottie has found it difficult as this is the first time the students have used the framework independently and I was in any case

interested to discover what these difficulties might be. Lottie's observation about there being overlaps between the representative and the social interpretations of the text is a pointed one. Moreover, it becomes evident as the class proceeds that there is some confusion about this for the class as a whole. I have tried to deal with this distinction in Chapter Five (5.2.2, 5.3.1, 5.3.3) but for teaching purposes this needs careful attention, more than I believe I gave to this in the first four weeks of the class. A final point is that although there is some confusion over terms like the social interpretation, it is also evident from the earlier discussion in Part 1, as well as in the discussion of the rest of the class, that students make extensive use of their social knowledge and experience (i.e. their lifeworld knowledge) in determining the possible meanings of the GQ text, the identity of the type of person who might read it (the ideal reader), and the magazine genre to which GQ belongs.

Lines 126-433 of the transcription record the discussion which we had about **the descriptive interpretation** of the text, i.e. the first stage of the framework. This discussion took longer than expected but raised a number of relevant issues about the GQ text and about how the students were interacting with the framework. This part of the class begins with me asking the group with Kate, Lottie and Mary in it what they had said about the first stage. Lottie speaks for the group:

(127-146)

JOR: ... So we start off with the description of the text ... um ... what did ...
what did your group have to say ... Lottie ... Kate [...] Mary ...?

Lottie: ... over a half the page is taken up by this photo. There's a sort of ...
sexual sort of angle and she's wearing the high-heeled boots and she's topless
... and with a corset ... and a sort of vain woman looking in the mirror ... At
the same time she is being sort of weighted down ... by the table ... and sort of
... which is the topic which is the fact that the psychological sort of ...
[unclear] ... behind this [unclear] glass floor ...

JOR: ... Right ...

Lottie: ... and um women sort of being ... more or less go a certain level ...
and so to um promotion and money ... [Pause 5.0]

JOR: OK ... Kate and Mary would you agree with that summary so far?

Mary: Yep.

Kate: Yeah ... she's definitely oppressed but she doesn't seem that bothered
does she? ... [Pause 3.0 Laughter] ... No Lottie says it's the mirror ... it sort of
expresses her vanity ...

Susan: ... A stereotypical male image of a woman.

Kate: Yeah.

It is noticeable that Lottie does not use the questions under the descriptive interpretation stage as a point of reference for her summary, although she does give a descriptive account of how the text looks and identifies the topic as being about discrimination against women. Her description is somewhat disjointed however. Susan, who was not part of this group, points to the photograph as being ‘a stereotypical male image of a woman’ (145). She thus recognises the photo as belonging to a lifeworld frame of ‘women as sex objects’. She also draws on personal knowledge of the work of the artist Allen Jones and tells the class that the table in the picture is part of ‘a whole range of furniture that this artist did’ (147). This leads to a brief exchange about why this picture has been used in this text.

(147-158)

Susan: But these ... this is like a whole range of furniture that this artist did ...

Kate: Really?

Susan: Yeah he did like hat stands and ...

Kate: What of women?

Susan: All using these women in like a sexual kind of role ... so I don't think it is just ... you know ... it's just a coincidence that this picture [unclear] ...

JOR: He's an artist, isn't he? I mean, he's a ...

Susan: ... and he's ... there's like a whole room decked out with ...

Kate: But that's the reason why they have used it, isn't it ... because it symbolises all of that?

Susan: Yeah.

Lottie: I think it [the photograph] sums up the ... the tone of the article quite well.

Susan's intervention in the discussion is significant. Not only does she have knowledge that the others do not have, it is also her view that Allen Jones's work is being co-opted by GQ magazine for its erotic potential and not much else. Whatever artistic or political value Allen Jones's work might have had, for example as a critique of female sexual and work-based oppression, is diminished by its incorporation into the GQ text: ‘I don't think it is just ... you know ... just a coincidence’ Susan says (151-2). Susan's perception of the preferred reading of the GQ text therefore seems similar to mine. Part of the text's main purpose is that men are supposed to be aroused more than informed by it. Kate also appears to agree with this: ‘But that's the reason why they have used it, isn't it ...because it symbolises all of that?’ (155-6). The contributions and exchanges of Susan, Kate and Lottie seem to suggest that they share a notion of an identifiable ‘preferred reading’ of the text, which in their view is partly erotic in content.

In her contribution Kate refers to an unnamed ‘they’ (155), the producers of the GQ text. This is significant because it shows that Kate, like Susan, sees the GQ text as a construction produced by unnamed GQ employees in which differing textual elements have been combined in one text. In this case the two main elements are a photo of a work by Allen Jones (which has been co-opted into the GQ text) and the text which has been written by Amanda Platell. Where Allen Jones’s work seems to have been co-opted, i.e. it has not been specifically commissioned for this piece (although a copyright payment may have been made for using it), it seems likely that Amanda Platell’s text was especially commissioned for this feature by GQ, and for which Platell would have been paid. When Kate refers to ‘they’ she is referring to the people at GQ magazine who were responsible for putting these and other elements of the GQ text together, and who would have been responsible for the page layout and design. Kate’s perception of the text producer is thus not centred at this point on Amanda Platell, but on nameless people working for GQ magazine, for example editors and page designers.

Lottie, Mo and Kate draw attention to the ‘realism’ effects of the text which were noted earlier:

(158-164)

Lottie: I think it [the photograph] sums up the ... the tone of the article quite well.

But then in contrast you’ve got this sort of um ... it’s almost like a ‘to do’ list with ‘five best business tools’ and (unclear) ... very informal ... colloquial ... and the way they bring the um summary of the text.

Mo: That’s like um in a newspaper when you’re ringing jobs and stuff ...

Kate: Yes ... like highlighting it, isn’t it? It’s very um ... the font is quite attractive as well ... it’s sort of ... (unclear) ...

Lottie sees the tone of the GQ text as ‘summed up’ quite well by the photograph, i.e. that it is meant to be erotic, but also that this seems in conflict with the ‘post-it-note’ text and the by-line which do not have erotic content. This indicates again Lottie’s sense of ambivalence about how the GQ text is supposed to be read. This has been a source of some confusion to her and to others. She also notes an informality about the post-it-note and the by-line which indicates that she is aware of a desire on the part of the text to establish friendly interpersonal relations with the reader. Mo makes an explicit connection to ‘ringing jobs and stuff’ in

newspapers and this is evidence of how students are accessing personal knowledge frameworks to interpret the text (cf. social interpretation).

It is apparent from the class discussion that students have constructed a framed perception of the text. This seems to have been a largely intuitive process. Their frame would seem to be similar to the one which I outlined earlier. It includes the Platell text, the photograph, the post-it-note, and the ringed by line below it (see 6.2.4). They also seem to be excluding from their discussion the same elements which I also excluded: the GQ banner at the top of the page; the page number, GQ logo and date at the bottom; the FYI text; and the BUSINESS TOOLS text written on the side of the page, because these have not been mentioned. The only difference between my frame and theirs is that they have not explicitly mentioned the Allen Jones text in the top right hand corner of the page. In order to make this framing process more explicit I ask the students about this.

(165-175)

JOR: ... Right ... What about the actual ... what are you including in the text? I mean how did you ... how did you frame the text as such?

Kate: Well, the 'For Your Information' we decided to leave out, didn't we ... although it was related.

Lottie: The only thing that was interesting was the fact that ... um ... (unclear) FYI [pronounced / fjaɪ /] is sort of business jargon ... um ... that I think ... because you guys didn't know what it meant, did you?

Kate: I know ... I know ...

Lottie: I thought that sort of summed up what kind of reader they are aiming at ... the whole businessman ... and not many would know what that stands for. The actual information in the box does not seem that relevant to the rest of the page.

Lottie, like Kate, mentions 'they', the people at GQ, and suggests that the GQ text is aimed at 'the whole businessman' (174). It is not clear what she means by this, although it is slightly at odds with the perception which she seemed to share earlier of GQ being a magazine for 'lads' (58). She also says that the FYI text 'does not seem that relevant to the rest of the page' (175) indicating again that she has the sense of a textual frame for the reading. Lottie's use of 'seem' leads me to make an additional point about the framing of the text. I want the students to understand that it is *they* who decide how to frame the text.

(176-186)

JOR: OK ... OK ... The thing is though ... who is the analyst here? Who's analysing the text?

Student: We are.

JOR: OK, so who decides what they're going to analyse?

Students: We do.

JOR: So you decide what the text is. Do you see what I mean? So ... if you think it's relevant and you want to include it, then do. But if you don't want to include it, even if you do think it is relevant, you can exclude it. You decide what you are going to look at. Do you see what I mean? But you can ... you know ... it's up to you. If ... if you think its relevant, include it, and if you don't then ... well ... its up to you.

My intervention is clumsy. I do not make my point effectively and I also say things which I do not entirely agree with. I want them to decide what their object of analysis is, to frame the text. I suggest that if they believe a feature is relevant to constituting their object of analysis, then it should be included as part of the text which they are going to analyse. But I then say somewhat clumsily that they can decide to exclude things which they also think are relevant. This seems a rather strained description now. It required more explanation. What I am referring to is the interest of the critical reader. That is, what seems to be relevant to the analysis of the text as *a critical object*? The interest of the critical reader is not a license to impose a political agenda on the text, but a statement of the *material* bounds within which a text is going to be analysed. By making this statement, the critical reader frames the text as *a critical object*. This may involve leaving out elements which are present on the same page, and which by being present are also 'relevant'. The FYI text for example is present on the same page and is therefore relevant to what has been framed as the GQ text. It also shares a topical theme in being related to offices. However, because this seems marginal to what I have called the GQ text, it does not form part of my interest. Kate suggests an intuitive understanding of this when she says: 'Well, the 'For Your Information' We decided to leave out, didn't we? ... Although it was related (167-8) (See also 5.3.3). Pursuing the framing theme, I try to summarise what the students have said:

(186-194)

JOR: For your purposes then you you included the picture ... that's it there in colour by the way ... you included the picture ... the um '5 Best Business Tools'?

... The 'No 5: The glass ceiling. By Amanda Platell' and the text there? ...

Students: Yes ... yeah ...

JOR: ... and what about this bit in the corner here? [points to the by line in the bottom left hand corner]

Students: Yeah ... yeah ...

Lottie: And then only the FYI at the end.

Paola: Everything except this one [The FYI].

The students seem to agree that they included the 'by line' text. On the other hand they have excluded the Allen Jones text.

(195-198)

JOR: OK ... OK ... so that was the bit you looked at ... All right ... and what about this bit of text here in this corner? [points to the Allen Jones text in the top right hand corner] Did you include that within your text?

Student: No, not particularly, no.

JOR: No?

Kate: We should have done I suppose ... it is relevant ...

JOR: Well, it depends, you know uh ... is it ... relevance is sort of ... you know ...

Susan: It shows that the um ... this is an actual work of art ... it's not ... I mean it's relevant to the text but its not an actual ... related to the text.

Mo: We said that it was a bit confusing how there was the actual realisation of it here ... that was just an artist's current things (unclear - on exhibit?) ... and she's [Amanda Platell] going on about a psychological floor ... it was kind of confusing. So that ... that kind of helped to set it kind of separate from the text.

My questioning 'No?' (199) leads students to argue through how the Allen Jones text is relevant to the page but in their view is not so relevant to the frame of the GQ text. It seems that they too have a sense of a frame within which the GQ text can be read. I reiterate what framing the text involves for their purposes:

(209-212)

JOR: Hm hm ... hm hm ... OK ... so you're approaching this text say in the assignment ... what you're expected to do is to say ... 'This is what I'm going to look at' ... OK? ... This is what's included in the text that I'm looking at ... or this is what I am including in the text.

I then ask the international group of Paola, Carla, Natsuko and Alice how they framed the text:

(212-219)

JOR: All right ... so ... here it seems that ... would you [indicating another group] agree that ... would you say that you have chosen a similar kind of text to everyone else?

Paola: Yes ... we've not included this part here at the bottom, but this one [indicating the Allen Jones text] ... well I've taken it into consideration ... it helped me to best to understand what it was about ... this image here does actually exist ... it's not just an image that they put there ... But in terms of ... I don't know ... language and stuff no just for to help you to understand what it was all about.

In the above series of exchanges (176-219) I take a more teacher-centred role and for this reason the pattern of interaction between myself and the students tends towards an Initiation Response Follow-up (IRF) model of classroom interaction (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). When I ask Paola's group if they have chosen a similar kind of text to everyone else, I mean have they included the same items in their framing of the text? Paola says that she has included the Allen Jones text. I then ask the class about **the topic**. Paola responds that the text is about 'women's discrimination in the workplace' (223).

(223-241)

JOR: OK ... um ... well fine ... that's good. If we go through the other questions related to description ... things like the topic, how the topic is being presented ... what sort of things did you uh ... think?

Paola: OK ... uh well its like ... its about women's discrimination in the workplace ...

JOR: Say that again?

Paola: ... women's discrimination in the workplace.

JOR: Hm ... hm ...

Paola: And um ... shall we say 'we' women, uh 'you' man ... businessman ... and ... um [Pause 4.0] she uses kind of uh metaphor of the glass ceiling ... she says that as women ... as men have an innate instinct for DIY ... um ... they have an ... an innate instinct to discriminate women in the workplace as well ... right?

JOR: Hm ... hm ... [Pause 4.0] ... They have an innate ... because ...? Say that ... what you just said again?

Paola: No because ... (unclear) ... the sentence seemed to say ... I think that she ... she ... explains this like with this metaphor of the glass ceiling and ... which is something that you can't buy outside of it ... that you have to uh build yourself, no? ... and as men have this instinct for constructing things themselves and this is one feature that these um ... that men have and not women for example ... in the same

way they discriminate women in the workplace ... and things like that ... [laughing]

... maybe its not like that.

JOR: That's very interesting ... wh... what do the rest of you think?

I allow for long pauses to give Paola time to express what she wants to say (229) and also to allow other students to speak as well (232). I also want to keep the balance of discussion directed towards the students. The responses of Susan, Mo and Kate show that they more or less agree with what Paola has said:

(242-263)

Susan: We kind of thought it was funny how they've made like an abstract thing that was the glass ceiling ... that you know ... you've heard about ... they've made it into like an actual physical thing that they've made it (unclear) ... and they don't need an instruction manual because they know how to do it.

Mo: Yeah ... and we were saying about the natural thing as well like um ... no instruction manual because it is innate ... it's a natural thing for men to be above women in a power hierarchy ... um ...

Kate: They don't need to be told, do they?

Mo: The ... the the text like um 'To do so requires vigilance and a fundamental belief ...' ... 'A woman is better suited to the bedroom than the boardroom' ...

JOR: Right ... right ...

Mo: 'A woman is a sexual object' and uh 'The fairer sex should never get a fair deal' ... 'bonuses for the boys' ...

JOR: Right ...

Mo: So it's only natural that men should be above women ... so it's like um the glass ceiling's to ... it's like um ... a barrier like that's their upper limit and men are able to penetrate above that ...

Susan: That's why cos it's for women it's the ceiling, but for men it's the floor.

Mo: Yeah ... they've got more ... it's like um ... kind of represents opportunities really ... that's their top limit women, and men can go above that.

It is noticeable that the discussion is now centred on the Platell text and what is being said there. A significant aspect of this is that Mo reads the meaning of the Platell text from a literal perspective. It is not the reading that we might expect Platell, as a woman, would want to convey. This as we have seen is a source of confusion for the students. With Mo's contribution I decide that we might now consider **the preferred reading** more explicitly. Up to this point the term 'preferred reading' has not been mentioned, although from the earlier exchanges in the class there is evidence of students having a shared sense of there being some

dominant meaning intended by the text as a whole. Paola, Mary, Lottie, Mo, Kate and Susan have all suggested this at various points. I am interested to learn what the students will now say about the preferred reading because their discussion of the topic has reproduced all the negative characterisations of women in the GQ text.

(264-277)

JOR: Hm ... hm ... OK ... OK ... so ... what would you say then is the preferred reading of this text ... What's the preferred reading? [Pause 6.0] What you've just said is the preferred reading ... Could you say it in a sort of ... sum it up?

Mo: Um ... A natural uh ...

Lottie: It's only natural men should succeed.

Mo: Yeah.

Lottie: That it's their right to do so.

Mo: Yeah ... It's ... it's not something constructed ... It's a natural given right ...

[Pause 8.0]

JOR: This is similar to what uh Paola said ... is that right?

Paola: The fact the man have a natural inclination to ... um ... It's normal that they get access to uh higher ... I don't know to ... to um ... [Pause 3.0]

JOR: Higher levels ...

Paola: Yeah.

There is a fairly long pause after I ask this initiating question [6.0] and so I suggest to Mo that I think she may have already said what she thinks the preferred reading is. Before Mo can properly respond, Lottie suggests that the preferred reading is 'It's only natural men should succeed' (268). Mo and Paola seem to agree with this. I am careful while these contributions are being made not to say any more than is necessary because I want the students to be able to express their own opinions and also because I want there to be a space available for other students possibly to disagree with this interpretation. That is why there is a long pause [8.0] after Mo says that 'It's a natural given right' (271). If the Platell text is interpreted as being 'the anchor' for this preferred reading, as this is the students' principal point of reference, it seems that Mo, Lottie and Paola are all making a reading of the Platell text which is literal, i.e. as meaning what it says about 'bonuses for the boys', that 'women should never get a fair deal', etc. I attempt to reformulate what has been said to check that I have understood this and in order to write it on the board.

(280-287)

JOR: OK ... excellent ... I think this is very interesting and you've drawn some interesting points here ... so ... if the preferred reading is 'it's only natural and right that men should succeed,' would you say generally that you agree with that as a preferred reading? [nods and murmurs of agreement] More or less ... yes? [more murmurs of yes] ... You don't have to agree with me ... Is that what you want to say? ... Yes? ... OK ... if it's the preferred reading ... then is there any sense in which what Paola called the sarcasm or ... of the text ... Does the sarcasm of the text still make you say that this is the preferred reading of the text?

The students' exchanges about the preferred reading demonstrate that they continue to see the GQ text as contradictory, particularly because of the Platell text. What is apparent is that they recognise two competing 'preferred' readings as being simultaneously present, the literal sexist reading and the ironic oppositional one which were both described in my own analysis (see 6.2.4).

(288-308)

Mo: That's what ... that's the uh reading that's coming through ... but ... you can ... you can ... tell ... it really ... it's like ... it's really hard to tell whether its kind of genuine and she ... she actually believed that and but she's taking on that uh tone because she is writing for GQ magazine, or whether it was really bitter and ironic.

[Everyone speaks at once]

Kate: It's on a deeper level, isn't it?

Voice: Yeah.

Lottie: She doesn't believe that she's writing ... (unclear) ...

Mary: It seems like pretending that she believes it.

Mo: It's like a ... it's kind of like a ... a reverse psychology kind of thing.

Kate: Yeah ... that's what we thought.

Lottie: I think what she's doing is ... the whole deconstructive idea that they talk about in TACO, she's doing it through the (unclear – her bit?) ... the effect ... the fact that that surface reading is so closely connected to the deconstructive reading that ... you know ... she is mocking them in sarcasm of like the strikers and the strippers and you know 'it's only natural' ... and the fact that they are so closely intertwined undermines her whole supposed argument that men are natural and right ... So what I'm saying is the deconstruction level is a lot closer and less ... it is much easier to find in this text ... than the result ... You get two meanings at the same time and that is why it is ambiguous.

Voice: Yeah.

The sexist reading that ‘it is natural and right for men to succeed’ is a variation on what I described earlier as a preferred reading in which sexual discrimination is used as a vehicle for generating humour and titillation for male readers, because it encourages a literal reading of the Platell text in which the dominance of men over women is advocated and confirmed.

For Mo, ‘it’s really hard to tell ... whether [Platell] actually believed that’ (289-90). She also sees the literal meaning as the dominant ‘reading that’s coming through’ (288) and speculates that this may be intentional ‘because [Platell] is writing for GQ magazine’ (291). Mo also refers to the ironic oppositional reading in which it is implied that the glass ceiling is a phenomenon constructed by corporate male sexists (291). Kate takes this up as existing ‘on a deeper level’ to the literal reading (293). What she is in fact referring to, as are Mo, Lottie, Mary and Kate in the above passage (288-308), is her ‘intertextual’ lifeworld knowledge of satirical and ironic texts where what is meant often indicates the opposite of what is said (cf. Gricean implicature). As Mo puts it, it’s a ‘reverse psychology kind of thing’ (297).

Owing to the fact that the students have said that ‘it is only natural and right that men should succeed’ is the preferred reading of the GQ text, I again seek to reformulate what they are saying because I want to impress upon them that the preferred reading is the reading which accords with what the text seems to want the reader to understand.

(309-327)

JOR: OK ... I ... I certainly felt that when I read it ... that there’s kind of this ambiguity going on ... but what I’m interested in here is ... if you say that is the preferred reading, what you are saying is that the text wants you to believe that ... that it’s only natural and right that men should succeed ... and ... I’m just asking ... is that what you think the text is saying?

Many voices: No ... yeah ... no ... no ...

JOR: ... the text is saying that it’s only natural and right that men should succeed?

Mo: That’s like its cover story ... below that is about sex and sexism in the workplace.

Lottie: And she’s using that to turn the other issue on its head ...

Mo: ... to turn it round ... yeah.

JOR: So below that there is this other reading ... which is about sexism ... sexism in the workplace ... and um ... could you say it? ... um ...

Lottie: It’s not below it, it’s equal to that argument.

JOR: It’s equal to it.

Mo: But I mean like ... below as in under the surface ... kind of

JOR: Hm hm ... um ... that ...

Lottie: I don't know ... I don't know if it's under the surface though because it's just as evident as that argument is ...

Both Mo and Lottie draw attention to the second possible reading 'about sex and sexism in the workplace' (316-17) which Platell is using 'to turn the other issue on its head' (318). Lottie has also mentioned in the preceding exchange 'the whole deconstructive idea that they talk about in TACO' as being a feature of what Platell is doing (299-300). She suggests that the 'surface reading' of the Platell text, i.e. the sexist reading, is deconstructed by the use of 'sarcasm' in it (sic). This 'undermines [Platell's] whole supposed argument that men are natural and right' (304). Lottie seems to have moved quite quickly to what she sees as a **deconstructive interpretation** in which the sexist reading is overturned by the implied oppositional one. Mo agrees: '... to turn it round ... yeah' (319).

Lottie's perception of a deconstructive interpretation may be somewhat premature procedurally but is worth examining for what she seems to understand by it. First of all, she seems to equate the generation of a Gricean implicature with deconstruction, i.e. the implication that men are corporate male sexists 'deconstructs' the literal meaning of the Platell text. This however is not an entirely accurate representation of what is meant by deconstruction in TACO because in TACO it is assumed that the text producer wishes to convey a *preferred* meaning, and is not trying simultaneously to deconstruct that meaning. In a Gricean implicature this is not the case; the 'deconstruction' of literal meaning is simultaneously *intended* by the text producer. The literal meaning of the text is therefore *not* the *preferred* reading. If it is assumed that it is Platell's intention that the literal reading of her text should be rejected, then the focus of our deconstructive efforts should be centred on the oppositional reading that the glass ceiling has been constructed by corporate male sexists, and not on the sexist reading that it is only natural and right for men to succeed. The students see the 'deconstruction' of the literal reading as a clever ploy by Platell. This is a good point, but in a TACO approach the active deconstructionist is the critical reader, not the assumed producer of the text. Lottie, Susan, Kate and Mo therefore point to a deconstruction of the literal meaning and not of *their* preferred reading. The other way of looking at this however, is that for the GQ text as a whole, there is an alternative sexist preferred reading, which the students have also pointed to, which is in conflict with the oppositional preferred reading of

the Platell text. My perception is that this sexist preferred reading is largely successful because the Platell text does nothing to contradict it. In these circumstances it is the implied idea (of the Platell text) that men are corporate male sexists that is deconstructed, on the one hand by the immanent literalness of the Platell text itself, and on the other by its existence within the framed GQ text as a whole.

In class I decide that in order to facilitate this discussion it would be useful to give some ‘solidity’ to the two conflicting readings of the text by summing up what these are on the board:

(328-345)

JOR: OK ... so what have we got? ... It's only natural and right ... and then sort of like that's ... I don't know ... 1A say ... and we've got 1B here ... which is ... that um ... uh discrimination is ... is uh part of the .. the structure of the workplace ... and it's it's it's um constructed along ... along gender lines that women are ... are um ... discriminated against ... systematically ... that's the word I'm looking for ... they are ... they are systematically discriminated against in the workplace and ... OK ... and is the ... is the text saying that this is a thing something that is wrong?

Voices: Yes ... yes ...

JOR: OK so ...

Mary: But not so directly because if she'd moaned about it, then it'd be 'Ah there's another women moaning about inequality' ... whereas if she uses it ... takes the man respectfully and kind of ... mocks it then that's a better way of getting her point through.

Mo: It seems like if she wants to exp(unclear) herself more on an equal ... equal with men she has to ... like take the male's point of view and put women down to make herself ... to make women actually higher ... because they know ... if she puts herself down, she is sort of in there with the men ... on their level. [Pause 12.0]

Reading 1A is that ‘it is only natural and right for men to succeed’ and reading 1B is that ‘women are systematically discriminated against in the workplace’. Mary suggests that being indirect seems ‘a better way’ of making a point about inequality (340-1). Mo takes up Mary's observation (342-5). For her Platell is able to put her message across by ingratiating herself with men, and taking ‘the male's point of view’ (343). As Mo puts it: ‘if [Platell] puts herself down, she is sort of in there with the men.’ After Mo speaks, there is a long pause [12.0]. I take the opportunity to summarise for the board what I think is being said:

(346-358)

JOR: So if I could just say ... summarise what you've just said Mo ... you're saying that ... that ... this ... this is ... this [1B: Women are systematically discriminated against in the workplace] is between the lines of this [1A: It is only natural and right that men should succeed] ... or under ... just under the surface of this [1A] ... so it is wrong that there is systematic discrimination against women is under the surface of the reading 'it's only natural and right that men should succeed' ... so she's kind of like sneaking this one in under that?

Mo: Hm hm ... By doing it cleverly like that could she in a sense kind of earn respect from men by it rather than as you [Kate] said like 'Oh it's another woman moaning about sexual discrimination' ... by doing it like that she's kind of ... and especially in a men's magazine it's like bringing it down from the inside.

Susan: And it's not like she's moaning about it herself ... she's moaning about them moaning ... I would say.

Lottie: She sets herself out over the ... (unclear) ... of men.

Mo responds to my suggestion that reading 1B [Women are systematically discriminated against in the workplace] is being introduced under the cover of 1A [It is only natural and right that men should succeed] by further reinforcing the notion that this is a clever ploy on the part of Platell. She also suggests that this might earn the respect of male readers, who will not think that 'its another woman moaning about sexual discrimination' (353-5) and will therefore read on through the Platell text. Rather than stopping reading and perhaps turning the page because 'it's another woman moaning about sexual discrimination,' the male reader is 'seduced' into entertaining 1B via the sexism of 1A. Mo therefore suggests, as have some others in the class, that it is part of the **reading position** of the Platell text that the reader must entertain the implied oppositional reading: 'by doing it like that [Platell's] kind of ... bringing it down from the inside' (352-5). This is a good point; if the reader *must* process the 1B reading, this militates against the force of the literal reading [1A]. This however rests on the assumption that the male reader *must* pass through 1B in the reading of the text, and this cannot be relied on. Some readers may for example read the Platell text without registering that it is written by a woman, as initially did both Lottie and Mo:

(16-18)

Lottie: Actually, because I didn't even read that it was a woman writing it ...

Mo: Yeah, I know ...

Lottie: I pounced right in and I thought oh it's a ... guy.

This suggests possibly that the oppositional reading (1B) requires more than a cursory reading of the text if it is to be activated. The conflict between readings 1A [it is only natural and right that men should succeed] and 1B [Women are systematically discriminated against in the workplace] is now key to the classroom discussion and is the main point of discussion for the rest of the class. It is difficult to decide which reading should be ‘preferred’, and so this is the issue I try to clarify next:

(359-375)

JOR: I find this very interesting ... um ... very good points you are making here ... um ... I am just trying to ... OK is there anything else you want to say? ... I mean the preferred reading seems to be slightly problematic then in this ... in this ... slightly ...

Voice: Completely.

JOR: Very problematic.

Paola: Yeah ... because if you look at the words she uses, you maybe ... probably agree with 1A ... But the whole um thing that you get from reading the text is not that one but the second one ... I think.

JOR: So you feel that the main argument ... the main purpose of this text ... the main purpose of this text is 1B?

Paola: More than 1A ... yes (other murmurs of agreement)

JOR: More than 1A ... that’s the main purpose of it ... Do you think that um ... all right ... OK ... we don’t want to run ahead of ourselves. All right, so that’s ... that’s the preferred reading ... which means then that ... who’s ... what ... If there’s a problem with the preferred reading ... it’s problematic because there is ambiguity inherent in it ... what about the ideal reader?

Worth noting in this passage is when Paola says: ‘if you look at the words she [Platell] uses, you maybe [...] agree with 1A’ (365-6). Looking at the transcript now it is noticeable to me that although as the teacher I have been seeking to ‘scaffold’ the lesson in relation to the stages of the TACO framework, within the class there has been a natural tendency for students to draw implicitly on perspectives which are derived from across the four stages. I have noted how the social interpretation is simultaneously present at the earlier stages of the framework and how this is demonstrated by the students’ references to lifeworld knowledge and experience in interpreting various features of the text. We have also seen that some students, like Lottie and Mo, are alive to a deconstructionist perspective on the meaning(s) of text, even if these do not entirely accord with how deconstruction in a TACO approach has been described in this study. Just as social and deconstructive interpretations seem to be

introducing themselves into the students' discussions at this time, so is Paola's observation about 'the words that [Platell] uses' (365-6) indicative of the lexical dimension of the representative interpretation. It seems to be a feature of this class discussion that the four stages of the TACO framework are being drawn on at various points, if not always explicitly.

Because I am interested to learn whether they think 1B is still successful in relation to the GQ text as a whole, I begin to ask this, but then decide that this is premature ('we don't want to run ahead of ourselves': 372) as we are still talking about the first stage of the framework. I therefore ask them to say something more about **the ideal reader**. If the preferred reading is ambiguous in their view, then perhaps a similar issue applies to the ideal reader, who, on the basis of the contributions thus far, seems to be thought of as male. In my view the ideal reader of the GQ text is someone who would read the Platell text literally, and would pay little attention to 1B except as a trigger that the GQ text is likely to be offensive to liberals and feminists who would agree with this oppositional reading. In the exchanges which follow, it seems that the students wish to focus on another type of reader who would prefer the oppositional reading:

(385-400)

Lottie: You pick up on the sarcasm which is an integral part of understanding point

1B ... you need to be aware of it ...

JOR: And so what sort of person would that be?

Lottie: So ... someone related to the business world or ... no not ... (unclear – only?) ... to the business world but ... I'd say um thirties mid thirties ... actually that's wrong because we're not mid thirties and we get it ... (laughs) ...

JOR: Well, that doesn't matter.

Kate: More mature you're saying ... [Pause 3.0]

Lottie: It's really ... just have a wider grasp on sort of abstract ...

Kate: ... issues ...

Lottie: Issues and ideas ... social ... references ... (inaudible) ... [Pause 7.0] ...

JOR: Has a wider grasp of social issues, ideas, concepts, notions ... that sort ... that's the kind of thing?

Lottie: Has to be aware of the subtleties as well.

JOR: Right ... OK ... OK ... um ... would you say the ideal reader's male or female? ... [Pause 8.0]

Asking whether the ideal reader is male or female is followed by a long pause. Students are perhaps grappling with the contradictions of the text: sexist yet feminist; erotic yet politically serious; pornographic yet artistic, etc. Another point is that the discussion seems to be more and more about the Platell text in particular rather than about the framed GQ text as a whole. The Platell thus text seems to have been partially ‘dislodged’ from its location within the GQ text-frame so that it is increasingly the principal focus of class discussion.

(401-408)

Lottie: [inaudible] on the fact that she’s arguing her point in a very persuasive way by using sarcasm to undercut her supposed argument ... but there’s some men

Mo: But it could be ... it’s for men though in the end ... like superficially men ...

(unclear – and women?) ... but really ...

Lottie: But it obviously for men because it’s ... (unclear – committed?) ... to a men’s magazine but ...

Mo: Yeah ... I think ... I mean ... it is for men but women kind of need to read it as well. She was intending for women to read it ... [Pause 6.0]

Lottie and Mo indicate that they think the Platell text was written for men, although Mo also suggests that this is superficial, meaning that it was not. Lottie notes that Platell is ‘using sarcasm to undercut her supposed argument’ (402) and then says ‘but there’s some men ...’, and before she can say anything more Mo interjects with a comment of her own (403). It is possible to speculate that Lottie might have been about to suggest, as I have done, that there are some men who will simply ignore the implied argument and read the text literally, as an affirmation of their prejudices. Mo thinks that the text ‘is for men’ but also that ‘women ... need to read it as well. She was intending for women to read it ...’ (407-8). This is interesting for Mo’s perception that it is *necessary* for women to read it. Perhaps this is because, in her opinion, if women do not read it, then, as she noted earlier, the point of writing the piece will be lost (cf. lines 13 and 22). She seems to feel that women would understand the implied critique of sexism and discrimination better than men. Mo also projects onto Platell the view that she *intended* ‘for women to read it’ (408). This observation provokes me to say that we cannot know what the author was thinking, we can only speculate:

(409-424)

JOR: Well ... we don’t know, do we? ... We can never really know what she uh intended at that time ... that’s why in fact I like to just ... I tend to try and just talk

about the text but I know it's easier to talk ... well ... the writer. But I try to talk about the text ... what the text is saying because um we don't know what the writer was thinking exactly ... we don't know ... um ... anyway ... OK ... is there anything else you want to add to the description? I think we've covered that pretty well ... um ...

On reflection, I have mixed feelings about what I say here because it shows me asserting my view of texts and does not really add anything to the discussion of the descriptive interpretation. It has been a theme of this study that we cannot know the original mind of the author however, and so I think I felt compelled to say something. Mo's observation is a further example of how students are using lifeworld knowledge, in this case about women's views of sexism, to give meaning to the text. Mo finds it hard to believe that a woman could write this text and intend it to be interpreted literally.

I tell the students that I think we have now covered the description stage quite well (414-15). This has taken longer than expected because of the ongoing discussion around the contradictory readings which the students have identified. Mo and Lottie seem to have resolved this by deciding that the implied reading of the Platell text must be privileged over its literal meaning, and despite the other elements of the GQ Text (photograph, post-it-note, by-line) which seem problematic to it. In order to establish whether this perspective is shared by the rest of the class, I ask the students whether in their view 1A [it is only natural and right that men should succeed] undermines 1B [Women are systematically discriminated against in the workplace].

(415-433)

JOR: Actually there is something I want to say ... there is something I want to say ... with with 1A and 1B ... um ... do you think that the preferred reading ... if you say that 1B 'it's wrong that there is systematic discrimination against women in the workplace' is the preferred reading of this text ... how successful is the preferred reading in the light of 1A? ... [Pause 4.0] ... does it succeed in relation to 1A?

Lottie: The fact that it uses 1A is a really good vehicle for making the point of 1B ... because she's appealing to the men's egos.

JOR: But by doing that, does that undermine 1B?

Lottie: No.

Mary: It could to somebody who doesn't really understand her humour. They could think that she was just saying that men should succeed and that women shouldn't ... (unclear) ...

Mo: She's emphasising it in a way.

JOR: Emphasising 1B or 1A? Is it emphasising that it's wrong to ...

Mo: Yeah yeah ... 1A emphasises 1B ... [Pause 7.0]

JOR: That's interesting ... So, we've got 1A 'It's only natural and right that men should succeed' and 1B 'It's wrong that there is systematic discrimination against women in the workplace' ...

With my intervention I am conscious of reintroducing a deconstructive perspective, but I want to establish more clearly how the students are now reading the text, i.e. whether their view of the preferred reading is still that 'it is only natural and right for men to succeed.' Although my question is addressed to the wider class, it is Lottie, Mo and Mary who mainly respond. Lottie partly repeats her earlier contention that the Platell text cleverly makes a point about sexism: '1A is a really good vehicle for making the point of 1B ... because she's appealing to the men's egos' (421-2). When I press her on whether this makes 1B less successful (423), she says emphatically that it does not (424). This suggests to me that Lottie would prefer to read the Platell text in a way that is favourable to Platell. 1B is Lottie's preferred reading regardless of the other aspects of the text which seems to run counter to this (see also line 493 below). It is also the preferred reading of Mo who says '1A emphasises 1B' (430). This seems similar to Lottie's view. As I have noted above, if 1B is the preferred reading, then it should be this that is the subject of any deconstructive interpretation. Lottie and Mo's concern seems to be the overturning of 1A, the literal reading. Mary, on the other hand, points to the possibility that some readers will read the text literally if they do not 'understand [Platell's] humour' (425). I then sum up the two readings which we seem to have (431-3).

The first side of the tape ends at this point. When we move to discuss the **representative interpretation** we do so in general terms only because while the students feel able to discuss the text they are hesitant about engaging in the questions at the representative interpretation stage, particularly those relating to grammar. I spend approximately 15 minutes discussing some of these issues with them, and this part of the class does not form part of the transcript. The main issue was that the students were not at ease with using some of the descriptors, for example given-new, ideal-real, and amongst some of the native speakers there was uncertainty about tense, nominalisations, and active and passive constructions. These terms were new for many of them and they had evidently not felt confident enough over the previous week to apply them to the text on their own. I believe that the responsibility for this

does not specifically lie with the design of the framework itself, although the students' hesitancy to use it more openly in class certainly raises questions for this (see 7.3.1). Rather, I feel the main problem had been my own planning in relation to teaching individual aspects of framework in the preceding weeks. That is, it became clear in this class that not enough time had been devoted to this. Students' uncertainties on the discourse features of the framework led me to spend some time in the middle of this discussion briefly reviewing certain aspects of the representative interpretation which had been introduced in previous classes. We also discussed the local/global relations between the representative interpretation and the **social interpretation**. The transcript takes up the class discussion again at this point.

(437-449)

JOR: So when you are looking at a text in terms of this analysis we're then saying 'what kinds of social knowledge do you need in order to understand this text?'

Lottie: (inaudible response)

JOR: Yes ... yes ... that the text assumes that you have ... yes? Issues about the glass ceiling, about discrimination, about ... about well ... relationships between men and women, about attitudes of men towards women and so on and so forth.

Paola: Like it's background.

JOR: Sorry?

Paola: Like it's background.

JOR: Absolutely ... it's background knowledge ... In fact for number 3, where it says 'what conceptual frameworks' you could write 'what social frameworks' if you want ... It means the same ... OK? What social frameworks. And that brings us back then to the deconstructive interpretation ... [Pause 3.0] ...

The students had sought clarification of what was meant by conceptual frameworks and I explain this in terms of the social knowledge which people carry around with them. Paola usefully comments that it is 'background' (443) and this leads me to rephrase 'conceptual frameworks' as 'social frameworks' (446-9). This phrasing has since been incorporated into the framework itself (see Chapter Five). By now there are approximately ten minutes of the class remaining and because of the earlier discussion it seems appropriate to finish the session by considering the **deconstructive interpretation** more closely.

(449-453)

So ... does any aspect of the text's structure as far as your analysis so far ... and I realise we haven't got into this as much as we might have wanted to ... but is there anything about the text that seems to contradict or undermine the text's preferred reading? ... Well, if 1B is the preferred reading, does 1A undermine it?

This returns us to the issue we had been discussing earlier (415-33) of the dual readings. Lottie, Mo and another person repeat what was said then, that the reading which suggests that it is natural and right for men to succeed does not undermine the implied oppositional reading that there is systematic and unfair discrimination against women in the workplace.

(454-462)

Voice: I don't think it undermines it.

Lottie: It makes it more accessible to the reader.

JOR: 1A makes 1B more accessible to the reader? (Murmurs of agreement)

Lottie: Because 1A ... (inaudible) ...

JOR: I see what you mean.

Mo: It makes it attractive for them to read ... but then they have to be able to get that that's not the actual reading though.

Lottie: This is the vehicle for them to get into the article ... because once they were intrigued they will obviously see the discrepancies between the two ...

Mo says that the sexist reading 'makes it more attractive for *them* to read' (459), meaning male readers of the GQ text, or the ideal reader. She then comments that these male readers 'have to be able to get that that's *not the actual reading* though' (459-60). Mo therefore admits into her thinking the possibility of male readers who will only process the literal reading. Lottie believes that 'they will *obviously* see the discrepancies between the two' and therefore register the implied meaning. I tell them that rather than seeing the sexist reading (1A) as making the oppositional reading (1B) more accessible, so that 1B undermines or deconstructs 1A, I thought the opposite:

(463-487)

JOR: Yes ... I agree with what you've said really ... What I found interesting from what you said is that if 1B is the intended reading ... this is the preferred reading ... that 'it is wrong that there is systematic discrimination against women in the workplace' ... My feeling is that 1A completely destroys 1B.

Lottie: You don't think ... either is the preferred reading?

JOR: Oh OK ...

Mary: I think you should ... (unclear) ... 1A as a kind of a sarcastic natural thing ... (inaudible) ...

Mo: It's not ... It's not genuine ...

Lottie: Actually I have to agree with Mo ... with what she said before ... is that 1A is the very very surface preferred reading ... that 1B she uses the whole ... that's

why I think this ... (inaudible) ... is interesting ... the fact that the deconstructive level is not deep.

JOR: So do you think that this [1B] deconstructs that [1A]?

Many voices: Yes ... yes ...

JOR: Yes ... is that it?

Voices: Yes ..

Mo: Yes that's it.

JOR: Now that's really interesting ... a very interesting outcome I think. You see I read it and I felt that that [1A] deconstructed that [1B].

Mo: No ... definitely ...

Kate: No ... I think you're right in a way ... It depends how you look at it.

JOR: Well ... of course it does ...

Kate: Because it can on the surface completely deconstruct it, can't it?

(inaudible) ... completely miss that.

When I say that I agree with what the students have said (463) I wish to show as the teacher that I appreciate Mo and Lottie's perspective of male readers being attracted and intrigued by an overtly sexist text which has been written by a woman. That I do not entirely agree with them is shown by my statement that 'My feeling is that 1A completely destroys 1B' (466). Lottie asks why it is not possible that 'either is the preferred reading' (467). It is a good point. I have approached the GQ text on the basis that it has been constructed in the way that it appears on this page for a purpose, and that this purpose is related to GQ's desire to appeal to a predominantly male readership with a particular world view (of women, of male-female relationships, of sex, etc.). The Platell text is for me so deeply implicated in this design that its value as a critical commentary on corporate sexism and the glass ceiling is nullified *out of itself* via the literalness of its presentation as well as by its juxtaposition with the other elements of what I have called the GQ text. What I see as the *preferred* reading therefore annuls the reading which is favourable to Platell, and so in my view it is not possible for *either* to be the preferred reading.

The main point of difference between myself and between Lottie, Mo, Mary and some others in the class seems to be that I am reading the GQ text using the imagined male ideal reader as my point of reference, whereas the students while recognising that the ideal reader is meant to be male, seem to be interpreting the text primarily from the perspective of readers for whom they seem to acknowledge the GQ text was not designed, that is, from the perspective of female readers who would not countenance a literal interpretation of the Platell text. From

many of their comments in this class it is evident that students do not envisage the ideal reader of the GQ text as anything other than male. There seems to be a conflict in their minds between the ideal reader of the GQ text and their ideal reader of the Platell text, who seems to be a woman.

Lottie mentions that ‘the deconstructive level is not deep’ (474-5). This recalls her earlier comment about ‘the deconstruction level’ being ‘a lot closer and ... much easier to find in this text’ (305-6). It is easier to find because the reading that men are corporate sexists is for Lottie *obviously* intended by the Platell text, and because of this obviousness the literal meaning is ‘deconstructed’. Lottie is therefore not deconstructing the preferred reading, but something else. This is significant in that it has affected the entire discussion of the GQ text and shows that the deconstructive interpretation and what this involves has not been internalised by the students. It might be argued that I am simply trying to impose my own reading on the GQ text. However, this is not the issue here, which is how the TACO framework is being used by the students. It is not Lottie’s or Mo’s interpretations which are problematic but that a deconstructive interpretation is not being applied to their view of the preferred reading. It is being applied to something else. Kate seems to concur with me that because of the way the GQ text is constructed it is possible to ‘completely miss’ the 1B reading (487). This is the same point which Susan (151-2), Kate (155-6) and Mary (425) make earlier. I respond to Kate’s comment by making a point about ‘true readings’ of texts which occurs to me at that moment. On reflection this was a distraction.

(488-505)

JOR: All much depends on what reading you do of it ... and I think this is another key point ... There’s no true reading of the text ... there’s no true reading ... you can’t say ‘Oh well, that’s it ... you know ... I’ve read it and ...’ ... I felt that the 1A deconstructed 1B. You’re telling me that 1B deconstructs 1A ... in quite a clever way.

Lottie: Cos as a woman I would not expect her to be damning her own sex.

Mo: Yeah ... exactly ...

Lottie: And I think she’s using her awareness of that sort of deconstruction to her benefit.

JOR: Right ... right.

Mo: She definitely knows what she’s doing.

JOR: Well ... I don’t know if I felt that way ... (Laughter) ... but if you were to make that argument ... I mean ... that would be um ... fine ... you know ... Just

because I have a different reading demonstrates the whole purpose of what
Habermas calls the um formation of intersubjective understanding ... you know ...
this idea of developing knowledge over the text by comparing what we know ...
what we think.

Lottie: It's interesting that you're the only guy in the room ... (inaudible) ...

In this section of the transcript Lottie makes the significant point that 'as a woman I would not expect her [Platell] to be damning her own sex' (493). It is not clear whether Lottie means herself as a woman, or Amanda Platell. If she does mean herself as a woman, then this is evidence of Lottie constructing an ideal female reader for the Platell text who is different to the ideal male reader for the GQ text as a whole which she and others have drawn attention to earlier in this class (e.g. lines 1-39). By an ideal female reader, I mean a female reader whom Lottie believes would, like herself, read the Platell text as a critique of corporate male sexism. Both Lottie and Mo are in agreement that Platell's intention is to 'deconstruct' the literal reading which the Platell text makes possible. Lottie says that 'she's using her awareness of that sort of deconstruction to her benefit' (495-6), and Mo that 'She [Platell] definitely knows what she is doing' (498). I say that I do not see it the same way and try to relate this to our earlier discussion of Habermas ideas about developing intersubjective understanding of the text by comparing what we know about it (499-504). Lottie thinks that it is significant (in a joking manner) that I am 'the only guy in the room' (505). I am unsure about what she means here. Possibly she means that being male has influenced my reading of the text, and that if I were a woman, I would probably agree with her. Perhaps this is so. On the other hand, perhaps she means that as a male critical reader I have an interest in attacking Platell, who is a woman. I believe she did not mean this, but in any case I think that in my own analysis Platell's gender is incidental to my deconstruction of the apparent preferred reading of her text (the 1B reading).

(506-518)

JOR: Yeah ... I see it the opposite way ... and ... it's not that I agree with ... my problem is that I disagree personally with 1A ... I mean ... I would disagree with 1A because it's a form of social closure ... but I feel that the text is not successful.

Susan: I think she disagrees with A as well but she has to use A to get her real point across.

JOR: Whereas I think she's sold out.

Mary: I don't at all ... I think she's clever ... I think she ...

Lottie: No because she's using ... she'll know ... because she takes the extreme as being ... you know ... 'stick to your guns' and 'you can never trust anyone who has to pee sitting down' ...

Mo: Especially ... especially ... you know it's not serious ... it's the way that she talks about it ... like um ...

Lottie: Even men would be like 'wah ... she's pretty sexist' ... [Laughter] ...

Platell, if she were asked, would probably agree with Susan, Mary, Lottie and Mo, who each repeat the argument that the Platell text would not be read literally. My rejoinder is that Platell has 'sold out' (511). This is a blunt appraisal which is indicative of my perception at the time that Platell had probably been paid to contribute to this feature. But as I have noted in this chapter (see 6.2.4), we do not know if Platell was aware of precisely how her piece would be incorporated into it, although perhaps what this discussion suggests is that we ought to make some effort to find out, not only from the editors of GQ, but also from Platell herself. She might also be asked to explain what she believed her argument was, especially in the light of some of the points which have been raised (see also 7.3.1).

The class concludes with some of my own reactions to the text. My feeling is that the focus on Amanda Platell's intentions glosses over whether the ideal reader would give serious consideration to reading 1B in preference to reading 1A. My view was that he would not.

(521-537)

JOR: Hm ... well my ideal reader was somebody who was reading this going 'stick to your guns boys in business you can never really trust anyone who has to pee sitting down' ... yes ... absolutely right ... That's the ideal reader I had in my mind ... somebody who would read it and go 'too bloody true' [Laughter] ... yes? That's what I felt. And I thought that GQ magazine is aimed at that kind of audience ... that's my view of it.

Voice: Maybe.

JOR: It reproduces and reconstructs the very discrimination that it is supposedly deconstructing ... but uh obviously I am wrong. But no I am ... but it is an interesting one, isn't it? I liked what you said and I'm most certainly going to incorporate a number of the comments that were made ... especially this stuff about 1A 1B ... because I have to include what was actually said ... what did people actually say?

Mo: Do we get a credit for it?

JOR: Oh ... thank you so much ... you'll almost certainly get a credit for it.

Mo: This is dedicated to my excellent students.

JOR: Yes ...

This final exchange is notable for how I share with the class my own alternative perspective. Like them I am aware of the pedagogic context and one aspect of this is that as a teacher I want the students to leave the class with something to reflect on, and which perhaps challenges their own perspectives. In the above extract I therefore explain my own view of the text and of how it seems to encourage a literal reading, one that would be affirming of the prejudices of my imagined ideal reader for the text.

6.3 Conclusion

The main purpose of the classroom data has been to present evidence of how the TACO framework may form the basis of a classroom discussion of a text and to illustrate relevant aspects of the procedural model which was presented in Chapters Four and Five. From the progress of this class it is evident that there are various aspects of the theoretical formulation, particularly in respect of the TACO framework, which have been inadequately realised and explicated via the empirical data which has been presented. That is, there is a disjuncture between the theoretical treatment of the framework and its empirical practice which needs to be acknowledged and addressed. The purpose of Chapter Seven will be to reflect critically upon the reasons for this disjuncture in order to reach some conclusions as to why this has occurred, and what implications this has for the arguments and perspectives presented in this study. Prefatory to this discussion the main theoretical themes of the study are drawn together in order that they may serve as a reminder of what these are, and so that they may also serve as a backdrop to what the empirical data has revealed about the TACO approach.

Chapter Seven

Concluding Comments

7.1 Aims and outcomes

7.1.1 Recontextualising CDA for educational purposes

This study began with a set of projected aims and outcomes:

Aims:

1. To develop a procedural framework for doing pedagogic critical discourse analysis with texts;
2. To undertake a selective ‘rewording’ of key aspects of an SFL language of description for such a framework;
3. To exemplify an approach to Critical Discourse Analysis in which critical and poststructuralist theoretical perspectives have been brought into dialogue;
4. To produce a reading framework for treating the text as a critical object which students as well as non-specialists can apply to any type of text, either independently or collaboratively.
5. The development of *discursive knowledge formation* in the classroom.

Outcomes:

- The formulation of a framework for critical reading and discussion which is theorised according procedural exegetic and discursive perspectives in critical social theory. (1 and 3)
- That SFL is made a linguistic resource in this framework rather than its organising principle. (2)
- That this framework might be used in a wider educational context than the one in which I work. (4)
- The maintenance of a discursive space in the lifeworld. (5)

Taken together these represent an attempt to respond to Fairclough’s (1999: 80) call, noted in Chapter One, for the development of ‘critical discourse awareness programmes [which] will be concerned to recontextualise [CDA] in ways which transform it, perhaps quite radically, into a practically useful form for educational purposes.’ This has been the overall purpose of this study. The thesis has therefore involved, on the one hand, an exploration of an identifiable theoretical lacuna within CDA in the construction of critical procedures centred

on the text, and on the other, an attempt to convert the theorisation which fills this space into a proceduralised form of practice in the university classroom.

The resulting critical model which this study proposes is one which approaches issues such as power, knowledge, ideology, discourse and text in ways which are different, in a number of respects, to the ways in which these issues are more usually approached in CDA. This is because the means by which I have sought to recontextualise CDA has been guided by poststructuralist and critical theoretical sensibilities in relation to these questions. In sum, the perspective of this thesis is that we are discursively and historically situated beings who are unable to stand outside the meaning relations of our lived existence in order that we may adopt foundational positions on truth and knowledge. In these circumstances, I have argued, we must learn to live with uncertainty and without epistemological guarantees even as we commit ourselves to an ongoing critical questioning of the social. Central to this formulation has been the attempt to identify, in the interests of an educational practice and the interests of purposive dialogue, complementary positions between the theoretical perspectives of T. W. Adorno, J. Derrida, J. Habermas, and M. Foucault. These thinkers enable a recontextualisation of CDA for educational purposes in relation to procedures of textual exegesis and discussion which are derived from critical social theory. This has been identified as a significant lacuna within the procedural construction of CDA. In the remainder of this chapter I shall revisit some of the key themes of the thesis in order, firstly, to highlight the main points of difference between CDA and the approach presented in this study, and secondly, to reflect critically on the classroom data by acknowledging where problems have arisen, especially in relation to how well the data seems to mesh with the theoretical design. I also wish to consider what lessons may be drawn for the exegetic framework which this study describes.

7.2 Revisiting the key themes

7.2.1 TACO as a 'critical' practice

It has been argued in this study that CDA is predicated on the assumption that a critical practice is one which is concerned with revealing the discursive mechanisms by which relations of domination in a society are legitimated and maintained, i.e. with processes and relations of '**negative power**' (2.2.2). As Fairclough (2001: 216) puts it: 'critical analysis of discourse is nothing if it is not a resource for struggle against domination.' The purpose is to undermine the apparent obviousness and naturalness of relations of domination so that CDA

may make an ameliorative contribution to ongoing social change and, in the longer term, to processes of social emancipation. I have argued that by putting the struggle against domination at the centre of its practice CDA considerably narrows the meaning of what it is to engage in a critical practice, and therefore also the incidences in the discursive practices of a society to which a critical analysis of discourse may be applied. If domination and its deconstruction are the measures of a critical practice, it would seem for example that the great majority of the texts and sociocultural products which a society produces are automatically discounted from consideration in CDA (see 4.3.4). This places certain limits on a mode of social enquiry which, in addition to being concerned with the discursive construction of relations of domination, is simultaneously the study of 'language as a form of social practice' (Fairclough, 1989: 22; see also 4.3.4 and 5.2.1). These seem to be conflicting positions in CDA and this conflict arises because the criteria for text selection in CDA seem to be based on a narrow view of what is to be engaged in a critical practice. This has the consequence that when a text is made the object of a *critical* discourse analysis, it is often because the text appears to be implicated in processes of negative power, inculcation and control, and is therefore considered likely to contain uses of discourse which may exemplify these processes. For these reasons CDA has tended to be oriented towards a concern for issues such as race and gender discrimination (Krishnamurthy, 1996; Billig, 2001; Ehrlich, 2002; Mills, 2003) ideological socialisation (Hodge and Kress, 1979; Van Dijk, 1998), political discourse (Fairclough, 2000b; Graham, Keenan and Dowd, 2004) and globalisation (Flowerdew, 2002; Lazar and Lazar, 2004).

This has entailed that in the theoretical and practical articulation of CDA the study of the discursive construction of domination has been privileged over the study of language as a social practice. What the theoretical aspect of this study makes possible is a reversal of this relationship so that the social practice dimensions of CDA are privileged over those of manipulation and control. This enables CDA to be made open to a wider range of applications and to a wider range of texts. Central to this rearticulation is that this thesis takes a distinctive approach to criticality, in which a *critical* practice is understood as one which examines through the study of a society's texts the discursive construction of social life. In other words, it is the study of how we as human beings construct and understand the world as we do through the texts which we produce. As was argued in Chapter Four (4.3.4), for the reason that there is no limit to the number and types of texts which a society produces, a fundamental difference between CDA and the critical approach described in this thesis is

that *any* text can be a critical object, and therefore *any* text may be subject to a critical analysis of discourse.

The perception of critical practice which has been presented in this study is one which views power in more productive and socially constructing terms than is usual in CDA. Influenced by Foucault (1980), and also by Pennycook (2001), I have adopted the term '**positive power**' to refer to this idea (2.2.2). A conception of power as not simply repressive, dominating, and excluding, 'exercising itself only in a negative way' (Foucault, 1980: 59), but as productive and constituting of discursive practices and of realms of knowledge across society as a whole, a *positive* conception of power, enables a reformulation of critical discourse analysis in which the focus is not just relations of domination but the discursive construction of social life as a whole. I have argued in Chapter Two (2.2.2 and 2.3.2) that in these circumstances, negative power does not simply disappear: 'Negative power exists, but it operates *within* the bounds of power as knowledge' (2.3.2). What this means is that issues of domination and inequality continue to be relevant critical objects in this approach; they are not simply effaced. The discursive construction of domination therefore remains a concern for a method of social enquiry in which discourse and texts are objects of analysis (see also 3.2.1). The principal difference which this study records is that this concern is not premised on a discourse of emancipation, but on a more open-ended critical questioning of the social, in the absence of foundational guarantees (see 2.3.1, 2.3.5, and Chapter Three). Rather than determining outcomes according to whether they are 'good' or 'bad,' this thesis argues for a discourse ethics which is concerned with an opposition to closure (see 7.2.2 below).

Following from the perspective of positive power is a conception of critical reading as a **discursive mapping** of the text's role in the production and reproduction of the (discursive) reality of which it is a part (4.3.4). This has the consequence that a *critical* reading of a text is not dependent on its deconstruction, because the process of discursive mapping is *already* critical (see 2.2.2, 4.3.4, 5.3.3). It is already critical for the reason of the redefinition of a critical practice given above, and because a discursive mapping of the text is simultaneously a problematising practice. That is, it involves a deliberate and deliberating reading of the text in order to determine, from the perspective of the reader, the extent to which it is affirming (or not) of the reading it seems to want to present. A discursive mapping therefore subjects the text to a process of reading, and of interpretation, which is purposely *not* that of the general reader, and this is a further difference between the approach described in this study

and approaches which are familiar in CDA. As I have noted in Chapter Five (5.4.): ‘the TACO framework is conscious of being a framework and approach whose principal concern is *critical* rather than *general* readers,’ it is therefore not a model of how people come to understand and interpret texts *in general*, but a specific educational model and rationale for how a text can be read from a critical perspective.

Rearticulating critical practice in order to privilege the constructing and meaning-making character of discourse over its role in the construction of domination (i.e. positive power over negative power) presents certain advantages for a recontextualisation of CDA to an educational context. Firstly, it makes it possible for students to analyse and discuss texts in a wide range of genres without the constraint of having to demonstrate how the text in question may be contributing to the production, reinforcement and/or maintenance of relations of domination, and secondly, for the same reason, it also gives the teacher a much freer choice in the selection of texts for the classroom. In both circumstances the choice of texts is not determined by a requirement, *prior* to the reading of the text, of taking up a particular doctrinal position in relation to it so that what is read, and how it is read, is guided by that position. What I mean by this is that critical discourse analysts feel obliged to demonstrate the discursive construction of domination and this affects the choice of texts that they read, and how they read them. On the one hand, there is a subtle pressure, even an ‘obligation’, to select texts for analysis which are more clearly associated with power abuse and manipulation than those which are much less so (e.g. a bus ticket, the design on a soft drinks can). On the other, this sometimes causes critical discourse analysts to appear to imply final readings of texts (see 1.4.2 and 2.3.1). The TACO approach does not, in any automatic way, carry this type of ‘selectorial’ obligation with regard to the texts to which it may be applied, although I wish to acknowledge that the GQ text which is the focus of the empirical data was, in hindsight, probably not the most appropriate text to have chosen for the purposes of demonstrating this point. This issue, in addition to some other inconsistencies which the empirical data present, are discussed in section 7.3.1 below. Despite this, I still wish to argue in favour of a critical approach which may be applied to texts in a very wide range of genres, as has been suggested in the theoretical design of the earlier chapters.

Amongst the principal obligations of a TACO approach are the Derridean principles that the reader should show a duty of care to the text and that s/he should subject the text to a double reading or ‘commentary’ (4.3.3). For Derrida (1988, 1995) this represents an ‘ethic of

discussion' in the reading of texts. A more general set of principles for critical reading was given at the end of Chapter Four (4.5) in the form of a CRITICAL mnemonic. The first principle is: 'C is for critical. Be critical, resist closure.' If there is an overriding theme in TACO, then a **resistance to closure** is perhaps it as this theme has guided my approach to many of the questions and issues which have been raised in this study. Relevant here is that a resistance to closure is also an orientation to opening. For example, the perception of a critical practice which I have presented in this study may be conceived as an opening of this concept to a wider interpretation, and to a wider range of texts. This study has also shown how CDA has tended to operate with rather fixed conceptions of its own practice, for example in relation to concepts such as power and ideology, text-choice and grammar, which have served to narrow CDA in terms of how it is applied, and also in terms of its potential audience.

7.2.2 TACO: opening up closings in CDA

Continuing with this theme, I have argued that CDA has operated with a narrow view of ideology, as a hegemonic false consciousness, or mystification of reality. In place of this perspective I have suggested a conception of ideology as 'a discourse or set of discourses oriented to **social closure**' (2.3.1). A discourse which is oriented to social closure is one which wishes to suppress difference by employing its truth as an organising principle, not just in terms of guiding individual practice from day to day, for example as a framework of beliefs for making decisions about one's life, but in terms of a *permanent* reordering of social relations according to the truth which the discourse conveys and projects. This begs the question as to what discourses are not oriented to social closure as all discourses are perspectives on the world and therefore are in some sense also orientations to truth. My view is that discourses need to be reflexive, to be aware of their fallibleness, of their limits to knowing, in order that they do not become the absolute measure of the difference between true and false knowledge. A critical practice which treats ideology as a perspective rather than as a false consciousness does not cease to be critical in an oppositional sense, it just does not wed itself to a particular resolution or goal. In other words it is a critical practice without an emancipatory agenda. Within the educational context in which I work, and within the limits of the theoretical understanding of truth and knowledge which has been developed in this thesis, I do not see my role as being one of emancipating my students, or of assisting them in taking 'the first step towards emancipation' (Fairclough, 1989: 1). I believe this is to presume and to claim too much. I *do* see my role as encouraging the students that I teach to

consider the world, and the objects of the world, in ways which they may not have considered them before, and to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live, through the texts which circulate within it, mediate it, and construct it. Related to the development of knowledge and understanding is that I have described textual exegesis as an exercise in keeping ‘knowledge open to processes of learning’ (4.3.4). By this I mean that the knowledge which is gained from texts should be subject to a process of questioning and discussion in the classroom, that is, to an intersubjective process of **discursive knowledge formation**. In my view this is one of the main purposes of learning. Perhaps, in this sense, emancipation does have a meaning for this study, if it means an ongoing process of questioning and deciphering, rather than an opening into a universalising alternative (see also 5.2.2).

With regard to the practice of exegesis of the text, three further points can be made. First, this study has presented a development of CDA’s approach to the text in which Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has been recontextualised as a *linguistic resource* within a procedural framework for analysing texts, rather than its organising principle. As was argued in Chapter One (1.4.3), the dependence on SFL seems to run counter to the recognisable ethos in CDA that critical language awareness should be a **public good**, i.e. something which as many people as possible can have access to. While some knowledge of language forms is central to the TACO approach, I have tried to demonstrate that it is still possible to undertake searching analyses and interpretations of texts without making recourse to an extensive systemic-functional procedure and metalanguage (although see 7.3.1 below). The empirical data in Chapter Six shows students dealing with sophisticated interpretations of a complex text within the class discussion, albeit not unproblematically. These interpretations, and the discussion which arose from them, were not reliant on a descriptive metalanguage derived from SFL, but were based on and framed by the language of the framework itself: ‘the preferred reading’, ‘the ideal reader’, the ‘social interpretation’, ‘deconstruction’, etc. On the other hand, there were a number of drawbacks, particularly with regard to the tentative way in which the framework was employed by the students, and these are issues are discussed below (see 7.3.1). In spite of these problems, interpretations were still made, and the discussion was still able proceed in the absence of an SFL frame of reference. I have drawn lessons from my experience of teaching the TACO framework which suggest that more careful preparation is needed, and that more dedicated classroom time must be invested, if students are to assimilate key concepts and terms more effectively, and to be able to use them

independently within the classroom discussion. With these caveats, I hope this framework may be employed more widely for the purposes of opening critical discourse analysis to a wider audience of practitioners and interested groups than has been the case hitherto.

Second, this study has shown how CDA's view of discourse is one which is based primarily on language. Rather than the study of *language* as a social practice, the object of this study is *discourse* as a social practice, in which discourse is understood as 'sign-making' or 'signification in use' (2.3.3). In other words it is a **multimodal view of discourse**. This has led to the incorporation of image features into the TACO framework (5.3.3). The other element in this perspective is that it is one which views discourse as having a *realising* role in the construction of social practices and social formations. I have argued, following Laclau and Mouffe (1985, 1990) that this is not a reductive 'all is discourse' position because it recognises a realm of causality (e.g. political and economic forces), action (e.g. human activity) and materiality (e.g. physical objects) which has an existence outside discourse. The position presented in this study is that for non-discursive practices to exist *for us*, as human beings, they have to be inserted into a system of meaning relations so that we may perceive and comprehend them. In this way the non-discursive is realised in discourse (2.3.4). This conception is also illustrated in the **four-dimensional view of discourse** which is outlined in Chapter Five (5.3.1). The movement from a linguistic representation of discourse to a *realising* multimodal representation may therefore be conceived as an opening of CDA's view of discourse.

The third issue concerns the construction of the TACO framework itself. This is that all the stages of the framework are interpretative stages, and that each stage is anchored by the text (5.2.1-5.2.2). The principal contrast here is with Fairclough's model, which moves from description to interpretation and finally to explanation. The second and third stages of his framework also seem to be more focused on examining how textual interpretation occurs, and with the processes and practices of ideological inculcation and social struggle respectively, than on the text itself (5.2.1). In the TACO framework, on the other hand, each stage is centrally focused on the text, and it does not include an explanation stage. This is in part an attempt to obviate the implication, referred to earlier, of a possible 'final reading' of the text. That there is a predilection towards a final reading of the text seems partly to be a function of CDA's attachment to Enlightenment paradigms of reason and truth, leading to a potential reflex reading of the text (see 2.3.1). It is perhaps due to CDA's attachment to foundational

notions of truth that Fairclough's model concludes with an 'explanation' stage. This seems to carry the implication that a 'truer' rendering of the text may be proposed at the close of the analysis. The privileging of interpretation over explanation in the TACO framework therefore also represents another opening of sorts, in this case an opening of the procedural exegesis of the text.

7.2.3 *A theorisation of procedure: multiperspectivism*

One of the central features this study has been the development a theorisation of procedure which is derived from critical social theory. This was the purpose of Chapter Four. I argued in this chapter that CDA has theorised discourse and society in relation to critical social theory, but not in relation to the **procedure** for analysing the text. I have argued that if CDA is to be 'critical all the way through' this type of theorisation is required. For this purpose I have turned to procedural perspectives in the work of Adorno, Derrida and Habermas on the basis of certain complementary positions which I have detected between them, and which seem productive for educational contexts of use. Adorno and Derrida have been employed for their perspectives of immanent critique and deconstruction (4.3.1 and 4.3.3), and Habermas for his conception of communicative action and the public sphere, particularly in relation to the operation of a practical discourse or 'discourse ethics' within an arena of discursive relations (4.4.2 and 4.4.3). One of the contributions of this study to a reformulated CDA has been an attempt to open paths of dialogue between these different thinkers, particularly between Habermas and Derrida (4.4.3-4.4.4), but also between Habermas and Adorno (4.3.1), and between Habermas and Foucault (4.4.3). While there are clearly also very great differences, I have tried to draw attention to central themes within the work of each of these thinkers which highlight points of correspondence and possible dialogue.

There are four principal themes which this study identifies. I will briefly summarise what each of these are. The first concerns possible correspondences between Habermas and Derrida. Habermas articulates a discourse ethics for a consensual public sphere in which participants are oriented to a *process of discussion* for reaching understanding (Habermas, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1996). It is the process of discussion which Habermas's discourse ethics encapsulates, rather than the orientation to universal consensus which communicative action implies, which I have sought to emphasise in this study (4.4.3). Related to this, we have seen in Chapter Four how the purpose of the public sphere is the maintenance of discursive spaces in the lifeworld which may act as 'a democratic dam' against the colonialisng imperatives of

the systems world (Habermas, 1992: 444). It is principally because of his genuine concern for the public space of discursive relations that I have presented Habermas as a theorist of **openness**. Accordingly, I have pointed to how Habermas's discourse ethics may be aligned with the openness of Derrida's ethic of discussion in the reading of texts. In addition to articulating a respect for the text, the ethic of discussion is also the preliminary move in the opening of the text to a critical reading (Derrida, 1976). Habermas's opening of discursive spaces in the lifeworld is therefore Derrida's opening of the text. Where Habermas wishes to take a stand against the systematising imperatives of instrumental reason, Derrida wishes to take a stand against the systematising imperatives of closed and self-evident systems of meaning. The encroachment of the systems world for Habermas is in Derrida's hands the closure of the text. A practical discourse in communicative action is thus a problematising questioning in deconstruction. For these reasons I have presented a view of Habermas and Derrida as **theorists of openness** who share, in different ways, a 'public sphere' conception of the social (4.4.4). The difference is that Habermas's public sphere is oriented to reaching understanding and consensus, while Derrida's is oriented to an interminable questioning and 'the democracy to come' (Derrida, 2003: 118).

A second complementarity is how the potential multi-subjectivism of Adorno's **constellations perspective** can be said to anticipate Habermas's intersubjectivism. Adorno's constellations perspective appears to assume a single subject employing different interpretative 'combinations' on the object, so that the object may be understood from a number of different positions. I have suggested that Habermas's theory of communicative action may be seen in these terms as the exercise of an intersubjective constellation on 'the objects that [are] subject to discussion' (Habermas, 1989: 37).

The third complementarity is the central importance of **interpretation** for each these thinkers. All are engaged in processes and procedures of interpretation as either 'constellatory', 'deconstructionist', or 'intersubjective'. The final complementarity concerns dialogic connections between Foucault, Adorno, Derrida and Habermas in relation to necessary mechanisms of **systemic power** which seem to be implied or stated within their work (4.4.3). The orientation to systems operates for each thinker as a type of constraint which allows us to act. For Foucault this appears as the ritual constraints which allow for the setting up of subject positions in discourse, for Adorno it is the self-image of the object, for Derrida it is the reading of minimal consensus, and for Habermas it is the requirement that

there be some systemic framework in place for the lifeworld to be able to function. All of these are forms of constraint because they each represent a starting position from which we are able to act, whether it is in terms of discourse, of immanent critique, of critical reading, or of the lifeworld.

The bringing together of these positions has been motivated by a notion of **multiperspectivism** in relation to social theory, and also in relation to the text. The idea of a multiperspectival approach is summed up in Nietzsche's dictum that 'we should learn how to employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge' (Nietzsche, 1968b: 555). In other words, rather than interpreting the world through a single lens or optic, we should employ multiple lenses in viewing the world, and therefore multiple theories and perspectives. It is, as Best and Kellner (1997: 267) put it, a question of learning from different understandings of the world, of 'articulating common interests, and respecting their differences.' The main problem associated with multiperspectivism is that of selectivity. Without attention to selectivity there is a danger of producing a model of theoretical eclecticism which risks self-contradiction, as well as an incommensurability of ideas. The theorists who are presented in this study hold differing views on a number of questions so care must be taken when putting their ideas together. While differences exist, and may not be put aside lightly, the differences have tended to be framed polemically, as Borradori (2003: 15) argues, within 'the *querelle* between modernism and postmodernism.' Habermas (1987a), for example, has criticised the other thinkers of this study for being representatives, in part, of a perspective in which reason and the critical project have been abandoned, while he is polemicised against for claiming totalising foundational truths (Lyotard, 1984). I have argued in this thesis for an intermediate position which focuses on constructive and reconstructive synergies between these differing perspectives, one which accepts neither the passive nihilism of ludic postmodernist positions, nor the universalist implications of foundationalism. I cannot claim have found solutions, but I have sought an orientation to educational practice which recognises the differences which exist and is prepared to work with them in order that their more complementary perspectives can be put to use.

This leads me to a final point, which is to place some emphasis on this study as an educational project, that is, as above all *a reading design for educational purposes*. I have not tried to create new theory in this study; my approach has been an exploratory one, both in relation to existing theory and in relation to the classroom practice. As was noted in Chapter

Three (3.3.2) I believe as a teacher that I have certain responsibilities in relation to learning. Amongst these is the responsibility to try to make some sense of theory so that it can be made more practical and comprehensible for the students that I teach. Teachers are in my view intermediaries of a kind because they endeavour to mediate between the rawness of ideas and their communication to a wider audience. It is therefore part of a teacher's role to seek to multiply the circumstances in which competing theoretical perspectives can be brought together to this end. In this light the text as a critical object approach may also be interpreted as an attempt to put this kind of responsibility into practice.

7.3. Reflections and future directions

7.3.1 Reflections on the study

As noted in 6.3 the main purpose of the classroom data was to provide an illustration of how the procedural model introduced in Chapter Four might be applied in a classroom context. The classroom data is therefore directed towards addressing the fourth and fifth aims of my second research question regarding how the TACO framework could be used. These were listed above:

4. To produce a reading framework for treating the text as a critical object which students as well as non-specialists can apply to any type of text, either independently or collaboratively.
5. The development of *discursive knowledge formation* in the classroom.

In the light of these aims, and in light of the theoretical elements of the thesis reviewed in 7.1 and 7.2 above, it is appropriate to reflect critically on the empirical data, particularly in respect of how successful it has been in explicating key elements of the theoretical model of exegesis which has been introduced in this thesis. This should also include an appraisal of how TACO would now seem to relate to CDA, and also whether in the light of the data any adjustments need to be made to this model, either in the theorisation and explanation of its key concepts, or in its practice.

Given these concerns, I feel that it is right to acknowledge that the empirical data has been less successful, especially with regard to the use and application of the framework by students (and non-specialists), than I had hoped. There are a number of issues which are relevant here. Amongst the first which deserves mention is the planning and execution of the empirical element of the thesis which, in hindsight, was not sufficiently prepared in relation

to the overall theoretical design and trajectory of the study. One of the key issues was that I only decided quite late that the thesis would definitely include an empirical component, my initial intention having been to write a wholly theoretical recontextualisation and critique of CDA. As my theorisation took shape however, I became concerned that since I was attempting to articulate a theorisation of procedure for educational contexts of use, not to include an empirical element in the thesis might leave the theorisation incomplete. I therefore decided to use my *Critical Discourse and the Media* class as an experimental resource for gathering classroom data which might be illustrative of the TACO approach. This seemed important to do, but looking back, it would have been better for this to have been incorporated into the research design much earlier than it was. I see now, for example, that for an empirical design to be effective in relation to a theoretical model, it should be planned so that it is as far as possible closely coordinated with the theoretical model, that is, it should be part of the empirical design that key features will be addressed and will therefore form part of the data, whether they are successful or not. This seems to have been an aspect which was lacking in the design of this study, so that the empirical component was in some aspects less effective as a means of explicating, and scrutinising, key dimensions of the theoretical model. The representative and social interpretation stages of the framework, for example, and the metalanguage of the framework more generally, are not clearly articulated in the empirical data. I will return to this below.

Also relevant is that this was a new course whose content and procedures had not been taught before. It was therefore exploratory in terms of striking a balance between teaching aspects of the social theory background of TACO, which I also felt it was important to do, and teaching students the necessary metalanguage for using the framework itself. In retrospect, I feel that in the early weeks of the course too much time was spent on the former, as well as on teaching students the perspectives of more traditional CDA approaches, than on teaching the framework, and this imbalance created problems for students being able to assimilate the framework in the manner I had envisaged during the theoretical development of this study. The empirical data reveals that at the stage in the course in which the data was collected students had not fully assimilated the framework, and this has impacted upon the value of the data as an illustration of the theoretical conception of TACO, especially with regard to the metalanguage (see below). More effective assimilation of the framework did however occur later in the course. This is evidenced by the students' assessed work, samples of which are included in Appendix C.

A third issue concerns the selection of the data for inclusion in this study. More than one class recording was made, but it was the recording from the class in week 5 which became the data for the study. The reason for this was that, of the three classes recorded, this class produced more discussion in response to a single text than either of the others. Nevertheless, having selected this recording as the data, I became aware as I studied the transcript, and reflected on the course itself that, in addition to the problems mentioned above, there are also aspects of the data relating to text selection and course content which, in hindsight, do not entirely cohere with the critique which has been presented of CDA.

These are some of the principal issues which the data raise for this study, and these may be expanded into a list of key points, or reflective concerns. These relate to:

1. The empirical design for the research;
2. students' applications of the theoretical concepts underpinning the TACO framework, and their use of the framework as a whole;
3. the teaching and assimilation of a metalanguage for critical reading;
4. the choice of texts for the course;
5. and the relation of TACO to the critique which has been presented of CDA;

To these may be added two further considerations:

6. The operation of the class as a Habermasian public sphere;
7. further modifications to the framework suggested by the data.

I will take each of these points in turn. With regard to the first, the choice of the empirical design for the research, this was not as effective as I had hoped because of the reliance on a single class recording for explicating students' use of the TACO framework. If my aim was to demonstrate how students were able to apply the TACO framework to texts, it would have been more effective to have been able to draw upon a much larger corpus of data, drawn from more than one class, and hopefully at a stage when the students had already demonstrated more independent and confident use of the framework. As it is there are insufficient examples of students applying key elements of the framework to the text under discussion, and this leads to the second point, which is that the students' use of the framework and the theoretical concepts underpinning it is tentative. Students do not make explicit reference to the different stages of the framework, for example, and central concepts such as 'deconstruction', 'ideal

reader' and 'preferred reading' are not always employed in the manner envisaged in this study. The deconstructive interpretation was, for example, not centred on the apparent preferred reading of the Platell text, but on its literal meaning (see 6.2.5: pp. 232-3, 242-3), and there are conflicting perceptions of the preferred reading (pp. 228-32, 244-5) as either sexist and derogatory towards women, or as a clever 'reverse psychology' and critique of sexism in the workplace (line 297: p. 231). This ambivalence is also evident in students' perceptions of the ideal reader (pp. 236-8, 242-3). Some students, such as Lottie and Mo, seemed to privilege a female ideal reader of the Platell text over a male ideal reader of the GQ text. The female ideal reader would reflect seriously on the implied oppositional reading of the Platell text. Where the male ideal reader was acknowledged it was assumed that it was obvious that this reader would recognise the ironic intent of the Platell text, although at various points it was also recognised that for some male readers this might not happen (pp. 239, 241).

The students were also able to frame the GQ text (pp. 224-7) much in the way that I framed it in my own analysis (6.2.4: 201), but in the classroom the Platell text and what it seemed to be saying rapidly became the main focus of the discussion, so that in effect the frame became this 'narrower' text and not the wider frame which had previously been identified. The students also wished to consider the intentions of the assumed author, Amanda Platell (see pp. 237, 244). It seems that not only was it counterintuitive for them *not* to refer to the author, but that there was, in addition, a genuine concern for what Platell's intentions could have been, as when Mo argues that she must have been 'intending for women to read it' (line 408: p. 237). Interventions such as these work against the perspective that what the text seems to be doing is more significant than the intention of the text producer (see 2.3.1 and 4.3.3-4.3.4), particularly in the context of dynamic, moment to moment, interactive exchanges. This indicates that, at least for the purposes of the classroom discussion, some amendment to the framework ought to be made which would enable the possible intention of the author to be more readily acknowledged and discussed. One option would be to include a question which, if there is a recognisable author or 'text-constructor' that may be identified, asks the students to speculate on his/her intentions. The GQ text, for example seems to be the product of an editorial team rather than a single author, such as Platell. Students might also be encouraged, if this is possible, to contact the author or 'constructors' of the text for their view, so that any response might be examined at a later stage in the course (cf. Wallace, 1992, 2003).

This brings us to the third point: the teaching and assimilation of a metalanguage for critical reading. I have noted that the data does not demonstrate a ready engagement with the discourse features of the representative interpretation (image, vocabulary, grammar, and genre), and shows that there was some uncertainty about the difference between this stage and the social interpretation (see lines 111-130: p. 220). One explanation is that not enough time was devoted in previous classes to familiarising students with the use of key concepts and to teaching students how to utilise the discourse elements of the representative interpretation stage. Students evidently needed more practice in putting them into effect than they were in fact given, and this suggests that I have underestimated to some extent the ease with which the framework may be operationalised (see below). These difficulties also suggest that some further revisions of the wording of the framework are needed in order that the difference between the representative interpretation and the social interpretation might be made more transparent. In addition to these considerations, it is evident that the GQ text was much more complex than I had initially appreciated because of the several multiple textual components of which it was constituted, and this was possibly responsible for some of the difficulties the students experienced in attempting to reach a decision about the preferred reading. With hindsight, the GQ text was not a good choice for evaluating how students were able to use the framework. It is a difficult text, and more practice in employing the full framework with less complex texts needed to have been given. This might have enabled some of the misunderstandings which are recorded in the data to have been detected and addressed at an earlier stage and led to a much more effective discussion of the GQ text. That this did not happen shows me that there were problems not only with my expectations of how readily the framework might be used, but also with the course design which I adopted. Both these issues need to be taken into account for the future.

Relevant to these issues is that some of the key concepts, such as 'ideal reader', 'preferred reading' and 'reading position', are possibly in need of revision. It may be that the terms I have adopted are not the most suitable ones for what they are intended to describe. Kress has commented for example that the preferred reading is an agentless passive, and so it raises the question as to 'by whom' it is being preferred.¹⁰ Better terms might be the 'apparent' or 'dominant' reading, although these present problems as well. Nevertheless, other terms might convey the meanings which I intend (and prefer) more clearly so that the sometimes

¹⁰ Personal communication.

subtle differences between my own terms are more clearly distinguishable. Future studies, as well as my own, will want to examine more closely what terminological changes might be made that would make these distinctions, as well as the concepts themselves, more explicit.

These observations raise an additional issue, which is that if some of the key concepts need more time to be devoted to teaching them, then how is this approach any easier or more valid than traditional CDA frameworks? This is a difficult question to answer as I still feel, for the reasons of the critiques of CDA and CLA outlined in Chapter Five, that the TACO framework offers a more straightforwardly procedural and less complex model of critical reading than that which is presented by Fairclough and, to a lesser extent, by critical literacy practitioners such as Wallace. There are three main advantages which I feel the TACO framework has over these other approaches. The first is that the framework has reformulated some of the key elements in these other approaches so that the questions which are being asked of the text are less overtly technical. Ideational, interpersonal and textual elements of grammar and lexis are not explicit in the framework, for example, but remain present in other ways within the questions and the metalanguage which inform it (see 1.4.3, 5.2.1, 5.3.3). That there must be some language of description available to the practitioner is the reason why the linguistic – as opposed to metafunctional – aspects of systemic grammar continue to have an important role in this framework, but as a linguistic resource rather than as an organising principle (see 1.2; 1.6.1; 1.4.3; 4.5; 5.2.2). The socio-theoretical design of the procedure distinguishes this framework from others which are organised along the lines of SFL, and this is the principal contribution which I hope this study makes. The second element facilitating the use of the TACO framework relative to other CDA models is that I have tried to make the TACO framework more organisationally coherent, in terms of the theoretical design and also in terms of the order in which the text is analysed. That is, TACO is a top-down approach to the text, and I have argued that this is an improvement on approaches such as Fairclough's which seem to be bottom-up (see 5.2.1). The third and final factor in making the TACO approach more viable is that all its stages are centred on the text, and I have noted how Fairclough's model seems to lack consistency in this respect (5.2.1).

This leaves four more points from the list given earlier to be addressed. I will turn to these now. The first (point 4) concerns the types of texts which were chosen for the course, and especially the selection of the GQ text in week 5. This point also has a bearing on the fifth of how TACO now relates to the theoretical critique of CDA which was presented in Chapter

Two (2.2.2; 2.3.2), that is, as a field of critical social research which is primarily concerned with the discursive construction of domination, or relations of ‘negative power’. With regard to the choice of texts for the course, I recognise that several of the texts chosen for this course, the GQ text in particular, are in fact archetypal exemplars of the types of texts which are most usually studied and critiqued in CDA. That is, they are examples of texts which articulate discourses of prejudice and social exclusion, and are therefore texts which are readily implicated in the discursive construction of domination and the dissemination of ‘negative power’. For this reason, the GQ text (Chapter Six), the Kilroy-Silk text (Chapter Five), the US immigration form (also Chapter Five), and some of the other texts which are to be found in Appendix A (e.g. ‘Isn’t this what holidays are for?’) do not seem to sit easily with the contention of the thesis that *any* text can be a critical object, and that therefore that *any* text may be subject to a critical analysis of its discourse. My own practice in respect of text selection, especially in relation to the empirical data, has seemed to suggest otherwise. That is, there seems to be a closer alignment between TACO and more traditional CDA approaches than has been presented in the theoretical critique in the earlier chapters.

For this reason, I feel it is necessary to problematise my own practice and pose the question of why I permitted a more traditionalist CDA perspective to exercise so much influence over the course design, and the choice of texts for discussion in particular. Having considered this, I think that in developing the course design I felt some obligation to introduce the students to more traditional (neo-Marxist) CDA perspectives as a means of contextualising my own approach, and so CDA’s concern with negative power was foregrounded in ways which later became problematic. I now see that it would have been more effective to have put greater faith in my own approach from the start. That is, I should have been more concerned with, and more attentive to, pursuing the ‘positive power’ orientation which has been argued for in the thesis, and selected texts, and text-types, which were much more topically varied, and which were also representative of a much wider range of genres. Most importantly, they ought to have been selected primarily on the basis that they were not the sorts of texts which have usually been studied in CDA. If these considerations had been incorporated into the original course design, they might have enabled the theoretical critique of CDA in this thesis to have been more effectively realised than it was in this course. These are lessons for the future.

Continuing with the theme of the theoretical treatment brings me to the sixth point. This concerns the extent to which the classroom presented in the empirical data realises the conditions of the theoretical model of the public sphere which was introduced in Chapter Four (4.4.2-4.4.3). On this question, one of the intended aims of this study has been the development of discursive knowledge formation in the classroom. Discursive knowledge formation has been defined as ‘the pedagogic outcome of a discursive exchange about a text,’ in which other discussants’ observations contribute to a collective constellatory impression of the text under discussion (4.4.3: 131; see also 4.5: 136). In other words, discursive knowledge formation is the perspectival knowledge which is gained by participants through an exchange views about a text. Discursive knowledge formation occurs in the context of the public sphere ‘conditions of discussion’ which were introduced in Chapter Four (4.4.2: 124; see also 6.2.5: 216-18).

Underpinning processes of discursive knowledge formation and the public sphere conditions of discussion is the attempt to realise a procedure in which an orientation to discussion has been privileged over an orientation to consensus (4.4.3). This procedure has been defined as ‘the articulation of a practical discourse for examining in a classroom context the validity of norms which constitute a preferred reading’ (5.5.3: 161 and 7.2.3 above). In other words, it is a procedure for examining through a process of intersubjective classroom exchange individual perceptions of how a text seems to want to be read. In addition to the conditions attendant upon a functioning public sphere, this study has highlighted those areas in Habermas’s thought where a proceduralist attitude to interpretation and to intersubjective discussion is apparent, particularly in the *Theory of Communicative Action*, where participants in discussion seek to negotiate ‘definitions of the situation which admit of consensus’ (Habermas, 1984: 86; 4.4.3).

Taking these points together, I would like to reflect on the extent to which the empirical data reproduces and explicates the public sphere dimensions of the theoretical study. This issue has already been addressed in part in Chapter Six (6.2.5: 216-18). There it was noted that although a great deal of discussion took place, this was centred on a minority of the students, Kate, Mo, Lottie, and Paola, who tended to dominate the exchanges, and that some students, Carla, Natsuko and Alice for example, did not speak at all. This suggests that not all students felt comfortable with participating in these discussions in the inclusive and uncoerced manner often presented by Habermas (1989a, 1989b; 1992). This implies that the classroom in which

the GQ discussion occurred falls some way short of a Habermasian public sphere as the silence of some of the students seems to contradict the public sphere principles of inclusivity and freedom of expression. The volubility and articulacy of some students might even be construed as have ‘coerced’ others into silence, especially those for whom English was not a first language, such as Natsuko, Alice and Carla, and was a distinct drawback in respect of the theoretical conception presented in Chapter Four (4.4.2). Future applications of this approach will want to consider how this type of discursive imbalance might be ameliorated.

More positively, in Chapter Six (6.2.5) I have drawn attention to the ways in which the classroom exchanges over the GQ text seem to adhere to each of the listed conditions of discussion in respect of the social status of the students when in class, the discursive nature of the class, the critical questioning and problematisation of the GQ text, the constellatory viewpoints of the classroom participants to the discussion, and the possibility, in principle, of equal rights of participation. A notable feature of the empirical data, for example, is the amount of spontaneity which is evident in the classroom exchanges. In addition, the data seems to show that in my role as the teacher I did not impose a highly regulatory order on interactions but, as far as possible, encouraged an open exchange of views while still seeking to provide some scaffolding to the overall discussion. It is notable, for example, that despite my ‘authority to direct ... and take on the tasks of organisation’ (Habermas, 1987b: 160) students still feel confident to interrupt me, and to disagree with me, as well as with one another. These features of the data would seem to confirm most students’ acceptance of the interdiscursive nature of the classroom, and in relation to the public sphere dimensions of the theoretical model are arguably one of the more successful features which the data records.

A further observation which seems relevant here is that the theoretical model of the public sphere (and of communicative action) which is presented in Habermas’s work often suggests a level of unconstrained communication which ‘real world’ realisations of the model are unlikely to be able to match. This is because Habermas’s public sphere is primarily constructed as a philosophical critique of bureaucratising tendencies within the lifeworld, and for this reason, it is necessarily idealised (see 4.4.2 and 4.4.3). This is also why the public sphere ‘conditions of discussion’ which have been presented in this study have been articulated as ‘guidelines’ rather than as ‘prescriptions’ (4.4.2). Since classrooms are organic, experiential interactions in real time between real individuals, the possibility of a perfectly coherent and seamlessly interactive public sphere would appear rather remote. Public

spheres are rarely, if ever, like this. The empirical data of this study while not emulating the unconstrained practical discourse conditions of a theoretically perfectible public sphere, nevertheless seeks, as best it can, to give an account of a discursive space in which these conditions have been adhered to in principle.

This brings us to the final point in the earlier list. This concerns whether, in the light of the data, there are aspects of the framework, apart from those already mentioned, which might also be revised. Here I am thinking primarily of organisational aspects, rather than of terminological or conceptual elements. The organisational structure, as we have seen, is based on a reformulation of Derrida's notion of a 'doubling commentary' so that the representative, social and deconstructive interpretations in the TACO framework represent an 'unfolding' of the second commentary stage in deconstruction (4.3.3). One of the notable features of the classroom data is that the discussion does not follow a clearly demarcated linear pattern, that is, it does not proceed strictly in accordance with each of the stages of the TACO framework. In place of a staged progression through the framework there is instead evidence of a tacking back and forth, or even a blurring of the boundaries between the stages, so that, for example, issues pertaining to the representative use of lexis, to social interpretation, and to deconstruction arise during the discussion of what was procedurally still the descriptive interpretation. Lottie for example, when talking about the preferred reading of the Platell text, makes reference to 'the whole deconstructive idea that they talk about in TACO' (lines 299-300). Mo suggests that it is 'a reverse psychology kind of thing' (297) and agrees that a deconstruction of sorts takes place: '... to turn it round ... yeah' (319), and Paola notices 'the words that [Platell] uses' as being significant to constructing a preferred reading (365). My own contributions to the class also indicate my recognition that the framework is not being followed in the linear manner which its organisation into four stages might suggest, as when I say: 'OK ... we don't want to run ahead of ourselves' (372). In light of these instances I have noted that within the class there seems to have been 'a natural tendency for students to draw ... on perspectives which are derived from across the four stages' (6.2.5). This has included, in addition to the references to deconstruction, implied references to lifeworld knowledge and experience, i.e. to aspects of the social interpretation, in the discussion of the topic and of the preferred reading. The incidences of non-linearity in the use of the framework might be explained by the fact that the data records a discussion rather than a written analysis. It seems to be a feature of spoken interactions that unpredicted topic-shifts occur within exchanges. This seems to be what is occurring in the classroom

discussion so that as different issues regarding the preferred reading are raised, so associations are also made to features which appear in other parts of the framework. Also relevant here is the argument of Chapter Four (4.3.4) that social interpretation, or lifeworld knowledge, is integral to all four stages of the framework or discursive mapping and deconstruction could not occur. As Habermas (1996: 187) puts it, interpretation must always take place against 'the horizon provided by the lifeworld.' It is therefore not entirely unexpected that students should draw on this knowledge while discussing the preferred reading. Nevertheless, this does raise the question of whether the framework is too rigid for the purposes of a classroom discussion and in need of some reformulation. This is an area which future studies might wish to explore.

A final organisational change which the data seems to imply concerns the placing of the preferred reading in the descriptive interpretation stage of the framework. If students seem to be drawing on features from the later stages in the framework in discussing the preferred reading, then one option which might seem appropriate would be to move the identification of the preferred reading to a later stage, for example to the end of the representative interpretation stage, so that what the preferred reading seems to be is identified *after* the closer reading which this stage represents. This would for example seem to accommodate Paola's observation of how the lexis of the GQ text suggested a particular preferred reading to her. This seems a logical amendment to make, although this change would present certain problems for the theoretical model which has been proposed. These are twofold. The first is that moving the preferred reading to the end of the representative interpretation would seem to imply that the preferred reading can only be accessed once a close reading has occurred. This however would seem to suggest a depth model of interpretation in which closer readings lead to truer interpretations of the text and I have argued against this type of perspective in this study (see 4.3.4). It therefore carries the further implication that the preferred reading is the prerogative of critical readers only, as they are the only people who read in such a careful and deliberate manner, and I have argued against this perspective as well (4.3.4). Moreover, since the preferred reading is a considered assessment of what the text seems to want to say, that is, of how it wishes to be received in the public arena of opinion, it is also a considered view of how the text seems to wish to be received in general, and this is one of the principal reasons why it is located at the more general descriptive interpretation stage and not placed at a later stage. Placing the preferred reading at the end of the representative interpretation would therefore represent a problematic change in relation to the theoretical model, and this

perhaps suggests more consideration needs to be given to the whole issue of how a closer reading is not necessarily a truer reading of the text. This is another area which future studies may wish to consider.

The other reason why relocating the preferred reading to a later stage creates problems for the theoretical model is that I have argued that the practices of immanent critique and deconstruction are premised, albeit differently, on the notion of a 'doubling commentary' (4.3.3) in which the first reading aims at reproducing in Derrida's words: 'a relative stability of the dominant interpretation of the text being commented on' (Derrida, 1988: 143). This reading is also an interpretation, but it is one which is made as part of the *first* commentary on the text. Thus to move identification of a preferred reading to another stage would seem to derail the framework from the theorisation on which it is based. Despite these reservations I think it is important to acknowledge that the theorisation I have proposed may present certain difficulties in relation to the consistency and coherence of the TACO framework as a whole, which may not be easily resolved within the fluctuating circumstances of a real-time classroom discussion, or the linear constraints of a staged procedural framework.

In this section I have endeavoured to reflect critically on some of the issues and questions raised by the empirical data particularly in respect of the data's failure to explicate the theoretical design as fully as I would have wished. I have sought to acknowledge what these shortcomings are and to offer some possible explanations of them. I have also sought to draw conclusions for future applications of this approach, particularly in relation to areas in the framework which seem to be in need of further consideration and possible revision. From the theoretical side, one of my principal concerns was that the classroom methodology employed should as far as possible seek to exemplify an intersubjective and constellatory approach in the reading and discussion of texts. To this extent I feel the empirical data offers some support for this objective. Nevertheless, there are problems and issues to address in relation to teaching the key concepts and terms of the framework, in helping students to assimilate them, and most of all in undertaking a research design in which theory and practice are joined together. This last aspect, in particular, was not as effective as it might have been, and I have learned important lessons from this in relation to undertaking such an empirical design in the future. Despite these shortcomings however, it seems worthwhile to emphasise that the TACO framework has always been a work in progress, and still is. For this reason I hope it may continue to evolve into the future whether in my hands or in the hands of others. The

next section (7.3.2) concludes the thesis. Here I wish to reflect briefly on where this study leaves political praxis, and orientations towards social change, in light of the poststructuralist sensibilities which have informed it.

7.3.2 Interpretation, politics and change in a time of transition

I noted in Chapter One (1.4.1) that this thesis is in some ways an account of how I have sought to overcome ‘the model of fixed and known Marxist positions, which in general only had to be applied, and the corresponding dismissal of all other kinds of thinking’ (Williams, 1977: 3). The theoretical path which I have pursued in this study has brought me into contact with many of these other kinds of thinking. By bringing different perspectives together what are also being brought together are different interpretations. According to Adorno (1977) this is the purpose of philosophy. For Marx, on the other hand, interpretation is not enough: ‘Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it’ (Marx, 2000a [1845]: 173). This seems right also, but while the world has been interpreted in various ways, I believe the main point, and the main point of this study, is that we must continue this process of interpretation, so that through our interpretations we may continue to imagine the world other than we experience it. This imagining function is one of the main purposes of interpretation, and this is what makes continued interpretation more important than a search for certainties which might ultimately close it off. Rather than separating interpretation from change as Marx does, I think that the principal condition of change must be continued interpretation and an openness to the possibilities of ‘positive’, alternative imaginaries and subjectivities. Thus although, as Michael Ryan (1982: 81) observes, ‘there is no absolute to guide action which is not historical,’ this does not entail that we should not orient ourselves towards the future in a positive and open frame of mind, ask questions, struggle, and resist. As critical discourse analysts this is part of our responsibility, for it is responsibility which leads to openness, and which makes moral and political questions possible. For without this responsibility, there would be no questions.

Given that a positive and responsible critical practice also implies a politics of resistance, it seems appropriate to conclude by asking where resistance stands at the present time, and at what points it might be applied. I am partly persuaded by Jameson’s (1984b, 1998) perspective on this. According to Jameson, we are not already living in a postmodern era, but in ‘a transitional period between two stages of capitalism, in which the earlier structure of the economic is being restructured on a global scale’ (Jameson, 1998: 48). In these circumstances

it seems right that we endeavour to practise a politics of the present, one which attempts to address some of the key social questions which face the world today, and which are likely to form the backdrop to people's lives for several years to come. Amongst these are the terroristic confrontation between a fundamentalist Islam and an evangelised capitalism, the Aids pandemic in Africa and the response to it in the West, the increasing poverty of much of the global 'South', climate change, and the seemingly 'viral spread' of the global information economy. In the midst of these, permeating and constructing them, is discourse. It is discourse in which these issues are realised, circulated, responded to, defended, and rejected, and so to adopt a problematising and questioning attitude towards the texts which frame these questions, present positions on them, and articulate validity claims in relation to them is, for a politics of openness and resistance, something to be encouraged. Such a politics will want to map these questions and to seek to deconstruct some of the key assumptions on which they are based. It will also wish to question closely the role of the culture industries and the mass media in generating discourses which reify global social relations in terms of North/South, open/closed, rich and poor, and, within the societies of the technologised world, present relations between people as relations between objects with identical outlooks and desires – an 'economy of the same.' If the framework which I have presented in this thesis can be used by young people and educators to map some of these discourses, to interpret and possibly deconstruct them, then perhaps some small contribution will have been made to the continuation of interpretation, and to the responsibility to openness which such interpretation entails. In this spirit I would like to conclude with some recent words of Derrida:

Our acts of resistance must be, I believe, at once intellectual and political. We must join forces to exert pressure and organise ripostes, and we must do so on an international scale and according to new modalities, though always by analysing and discussing the very foundations of our responsibility, its discourses, its heritage, and its axioms. (Derrida, 2003: 126)

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Appendix A Class Transcript Week 5

Critical Discourse and the Media: Week 5

Session 5 (Part II). Discussion of a text: '5 Best Business Tools' in GQ Magazine

Transcription key

...	A brief pause (approx. 1.0 - 2.0 seconds)
[Pause 4.0]	A pause of approximately 4.0 seconds
(unclear)	What was said is indistinguishable from the tape
(Laughter)	Students laugh
/tuf/	phonetic transcription of what is heard on the tape.
[1A]	Items in square brackets have been introduced into the transcription. They are not recorded on the tape.

Text cut off in original

1 JOR: So you had ... you had ...two texts last week. Um which one shall we look
2 at, which one shall we look at now?
3 Kate: The GQ one [general murmurings of agreement]
4 JOR: Yeah? How does everybody feel about that?
5 Mary: I've done it twice now ... (unclear) ... and I still don't get it. I know it's
6 about sexism and ...
7 Lottie: I had to read it about three times before I understood it.
8 JOR: You had to read it about three times?
9 Mo: Yeah that whole thing about 'you call it a floor, we call it a ceiling' whatever,
0 it just kept going on and on about that and um well ... It just seemed completely um
1 ...
2 Lottie: It's really nothing to do with ... (unclear) ...
3 Mo: ... pointless.
4 Lottie: It's all about ...
5 Mo: ... keeping women under control ... Yeah.
6 Lottie: Actually, because I didn't even read that it was a woman writing it ...
7 Mo: Yeah, I know ...
8 Lottie: I pounced right in and I thought oh it's a ... guy.
9 Mo: It sounds really like blokeish and 'keep the women down' and that sort of
0 thing ... and it's written by a woman. So ... isn't that completely contradictory?
1 Mary: Is she being quite sarcastic ... (unclear)?
2 Mo: Yeah ... I wasn't sure about that, but then what would be the point ... because
3 it's a men's magazine ... so what would be the point of her being sarcastic towards
4 ... that wouldn't really uh apply to the readers ... the audience, would it? Though I
5 wasn't sure.
6 Lottie: Is it a real sort of ... (unclear) ... a real uh everything sort of ...
7 Mo: Yeah I want ... it's FHM. GQ yeah it's like uh FHM and that kind of thing.
8 JOR: Say that again ... It's sort of who?
9 Mo: It's ... its like FHM and stuff like that.
0 Kate: Yeah I think so.
1 Susan: The lads' magazine.
2 All: Yeah.
3 JOR: I didn't catch the first point.
4 All: FHM.
5 Mary: Have you never read FHM?
6 JOR: FA Chairmen?
7 Kate: Yeah ... FHM. (Laughter)
8 JOR: Oh ... I was thinking Football Association Chairmen ... (Laughter) ... FHM
9 ... yes ... yes ... I am with you now ... sorry.

Lottie: It's all sort of compiled with really weird non-important facts and like ...
really random ... (unclear) ... information.

Mo: Yeah ... like um weird injuries.

Kate: Oh yeah ... things like that yeah and uh cars ...

Mary: ... and boobs.

Mo: Yes ... most importantly ... Yeah.

Lottie: Ten times better than girls' magazines.

Mary: Can't take much more ... (unclear).

JOR: They're better than girls' magazines?

Lottie: Yeah, they're so much more practical. Well look ... they have silly things
but they have practical things as well.

Mo: Yeah ... they are funny.

Lottie: Because mainly in girls' magazines ...

Mary: Like 'how to look pretty' ... 'what to eat' ...

(Laughter ... many voices at once - indistinguishable)

Lottie: All the same stuff.

Mo: It's like 'make sure you get a husband before you're thirty' ... that kind of
thing ... (Laughter)

Lottie: ... whereas lads' magazines have really practical things.

JOR: Like what?

Lottie: It's like they're ... (unclear) ... with a lot more practical ... (unclear) ...

JOR: uh uh ... Do you feel ...

Susan: ... dying ... like how many people die from being left-handed a year in
America and stupid facts like that (Laughter).

Lottie: It is ... it's a real mix of ... and then they've got really practical things
about ... There's a lot about ... um ... say men's health ... like um practical keep fit
things instead of just ordinary stuff.

Mo: Mm ... like there's a brand new diet that guarantees you can lose five stone in
a week or something ... that's always ... (unclear) ...

JOR: And sorry, that's in what kind of magazine?

Mo: In women's magazines ... the new diet where you can eat all the cake you
want ... lose five stone.

JOR: Now I take it you're not too ... you don't seem too um enamoured or taken
with the girls' magazines.

Mo: Well, they're all the same. It's all like how to get a guy and how to lose
weight and how to look like this and how to do this ...

Kate: That is what most girls are interested in to be honest. It's a little bit
superficial but ...

JOR: Is it?

Kate: It comes down to women really.

Mary: There's no naked men ... (unclear) ...

Lottie: There aren't people interested in other things because that is what they are fed about women.

Kate: Yeah ... probably ... [Pause 4.0]

JOR: OK ... Well ... Thank you ... that ... that um ... contextualises the text very well I think ... um ... so ... what I suggest we do now is ... if you in little groups ... um would like to just discuss your ... your reactions to this text ... in terms of TACO ... as we called it. Just what are your ... what are your impressions and uh what sort of things from doing your analysis are relevant here? So if we do that for a few minutes and then we can feed back to the class ... Is that all right ... yes? So you three are going to work together. You two ... and you ... you four together? Yes probably you four together. Is that all right?

[STUDENTS WORK IN GROUPS FOR APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES]

JOR: OK ... so um ... are we ready to discuss this ... yes? What I have done is I've put these [the four stages of TACO] on the board up here so that we can take notes while we're going along. I wonder if anybody'd volunteer to copy whatever I put up there onto a piece of paper, so that I could have a copy at the end?

Mary: Yes, I will.

JOR: Will you? Is that OK? Thanks ... [Pause 3.0] ... OK ... so GQ magazine.

Mo ... what did you say GQ stood for?

Mo: I think it's 'Gentleman's Quarterly'.

JOR: OK ... I didn't know that.

Kate: It makes sense though, doesn't it? I can't think of what else it might be.

Lottie: It really defines who the reader is supposed to be I think ... It's ... (unclear) ...

Mo: Or it's ironic.

JOR: But it isn't a quarterly is it? It's a monthly. Is it bi-monthly or monthly?

Mo: No ... monthly I think ... yeah ... yeah probably ... It says GQ November.

JOR: Sorry?

Mo: It says GQ November.

JOR: Oh yeah ... I haven't bought it since ... I promise. Anyway ... um ... so you had a look at it ... and you tried to look at it in terms of the procedure ... did you find the procedure ... how did you find the procedure to use? Did you find it ...

Lottie: The questions are a bit [Sounds like /tuf/ = tough?]

JOR: Yeah?

Kate: Some of them are quite similar though.

JOR: Hm hm?

[Students talk over one another. Unclear; but Lottie seems to say '... overlaps between the representative (unclear) and the social']

JOR: OK.

Lottie: Like questions ... um ... 'what social values can be attached to the discourse features' ... 'what conceptual frameworks is the text a part of?'

JOR: Hm hm ... hm hm ...

Lottie: Things like that.

JOR: OK ... OK ... yes ... I see what you mean ... [Pause 3.0] ... OK fine, well let's see how we get on anyway. So we start off with the description of the text ... um ... what did ... what did your group have to say ... Lottie ... Kate ...

Lottie: Well really like ...

JOR: ... Mary ...?

Lottie: ... over a half the page is taken up by this photo. There's a sort of ... sexual sort of angle and she's wearing the high-heeled boots and she's topless ... and with a corset ... and a sort of vain woman looking in the mirror ... At the same time she is being sort of weighted down ... by the table ... and sort of ... which is the topic which is the fact that the psychological sort of ... [unclear] ... behind this [unclear] glass floor ...

JOR: ... Right ...

Lottie: ... and um women sort of being ... more or less go a certain level ... and so to um promotion and money ... [Pause 5.0]

JOR: OK ... Kate and Mary would you agree with that summary so far?

Mary: Yep.

Kate: Yeah ... she's definitely oppressed but she doesn't seem that bothered does she? ... [Pause 3.0 Laughter] ... No Lottie says it's the mirror ... it sort of expresses her vanity ...

Susan: ... A stereotypical male image of a woman.

Kate: Yeah.

Susan: But these ... this is like a whole range of furniture that this artist did ...

Kate: Really?

Susan: Yeah he did like hat stands and ...

Kate: What of women?

Susan: All using these women in like a sexual kind of role ... so I don't think it is just ... you know ... it's just a coincidence that this picture [unclear] ...

JOR: He's an artist, isn't he? I mean, he's a ...

Susan: ... and he's ... there's like a whole room decked out with ...

Kate: But that's the reason why they have used it, isn't it ... because it symbolises all of that.

Susan: Yeah.

Lottie: I think it sums up the ... the tone of the article quite well. But then in
 contrast you've got this sort of um ... it's almost like a 'to do' list with 'five best
 business tools' and (unclear) ... very informal ... colloquial ... and the way they
 bring the um summary of the text.
 Mo: That's like um in a newspaper when you're ringing jobs and stuff ...
 Kate: Yes ... like highlighting it, isn't it? It's very um ... the font is quite
 attractive as well ... it's sort of ... (unclear) ...
 JOR: ... Right ... What about the actual ... what are you including in the text? I
 mean how did you ... how did you frame the text as such?
 Kate: Well, the 'For Your Information' we decided to leave out, didn't we? ...
 Although it was related.
 Lottie: The only thing that was interesting was the fact that ... um ... (unclear) FYI
 [pronounced /fjai/] is sort of business jargon ... um ... that I think ... because you
 guys didn't know what it meant, did you?
 Kate: I know ... I know ...
 Lottie: I thought that sort of summed up what kind of reader they are aiming at ...
 the whole businessman ... and not many would know what that stands for. The
 actual information in the box does not seem that relevant to the rest of the page.
 JOR: OK ... OK ... The thing is though ... who is the analyst here? Who's
 analysing the text?
 Student: We are.
 JOR: OK, so who decides what they're going to analyse?
 Students: We do.
 JOR: So you decide what the text is. Do you see what I mean? So ... if you think
 it's relevant and you want to include it, then do. But if you don't want to include it,
 even if you do think it is relevant, you can exclude it. You decide what you are
 going to look at. Do you see what I mean? But you can ... you know ... it's up to
 you. If ... if you think its relevant, include it, and if you don't then ... well ... its
 up to you. For your purposes then you you included the picture ... that's it there in
 colour by the way ... you included the picture ... the um '5 best business tools'? ...
 The 'No 5: The glass ceiling. By Amanda Platell' and the text there? ...
 Students: Yes ... yeah ...
 JOR: ... and what about this bit in the corner here? [points to the by-line in the
 bottom left hand corner]
 Students: Yeah ... yeah ...
 Lottie: And then only the FYI at the end.
 Paola: Everything except this one [The FYI].
 JOR: OK ... OK ... so that was the bit you looked at ... All right ... and what
 about this bit of text here in this corner? ? [points to the Allen Jones text in the top
 right hand corner] Did you include that within your text?

Student: No, not particularly, no.

JOR: No?

Kate: We should have done I suppose ...it is relevant ...

JOR: Well, it depends, you know uh ... is it ... relevance is sort of ... you know ...

Susan: It shows that the um ... this is an actual work of art ... it's not ... I mean it's relevant to the text but its not an actual ... related to the text.

Mo: We said that it was a bit confusing how there was the actual realisation of it here ... that was just an artist's current things (unclear - on exhibit?) ... and she's [Amanda Platell] going on about a psychological floor ... it was kind of confusing. So that ... that kind of helped to set it kind of separate from the text.

JOR: Hm hm ... hm hm ... OK ... so you're approaching this text say in the assignment ... what you're expected to do is to say ... 'This is what I'm going to look at' ... OK? ... This is what's included in the text that I'm looking at ... or this is what I am including in the text. All right ... so ... here it seems that ... would you [indicating another group] agree that ... would you say that you have chosen a similar kind of text to everyone else?

Paola: Yes ... we've not included this part here at the bottom, but this one [indicating the top right hand corner] ... well I've taken it into consideration ... it helped me to best to understand what it was about ... this image here does actually exist ... it's not just an image that they put there ... But in terms of ... I don't know ... language and stuff no just for to help you to understand what it was all about.

JOR: OK ... um ... well fine ... that's good. If we go through the other questions related to description ... things like the topic, how the topic is being presented ... what sort of things did you uh ... think?

Paola: OK ... uh well its like ... its about women's discrimination in the workplace ...

JOR: Say that again?

Paola: ... women's discrimination in the workplace

JOR: Hm ... hm ...

Paola: And um ... shall we say 'we' women, uh 'you' man ... businessman ... and ... um [Pause 4.0] she uses kind of uh metaphor of the glass ceiling ... she says that as women ... as men have an innate instinct for DIY ... um ... they have an ... an innate instinct to discriminate women in the workplace as well ... right?

JOR: Hm ... hm ...[Pause 4.0] ... They have an innate ... because ...? Say that ... what you just said again?

Paola: No because ... (unclear) ... the sentence seemed to say ... I think that she ... she ... explains this like with this metaphor of the glass ceiling and ... which is something that you can't buy outside of it ... that you have to uh build yourself, no? ... and as men have this instinct for constructing things themselves and this is one

feature that these um ... that men have and not women for example ... in the same way they discriminate women in the workplace ... and things like that ... [laughing] ... maybe its not like that.

JOR: That's very interesting ... wh... what do the rest of you think?

Susan: We kind of thought it was funny how they've made like an abstract thing that was the glass ceiling ... that you know ... you've heard about ... they've made it into like an actual physical thing that they've made it (unclear) ... and they don't need an instruction manual because they know how to do it.

Mo: Yeah ... and we were saying about the natural thing as well like um ... no instruction manual because it is innate ... it's a natural thing for men to be above women in a power hierarchy ... um ...

Kate: They don't need to be told, do they?

Mo: Yeah ... yeah ... That it reduces women to uh like sexual objects and um ...

JOR: Sorry ... what does? The ...?

Mo: The ... the the text like um 'To do so requires vigilance and a fundamental belief ...' ... 'A woman is better suited to the bedroom than the boardroom' ...

JOR: Right ... right ...

Mo: 'A woman is a sexual object' and uh 'The fairer sex should never get a fair deal' ... 'bonuses for the boys' ...

JOR: Right ...

Mo: So it's only natural that men should be above women ... so it's like um the glass ceiling's to ... it's like um ... a barrier like that's their upper limit and men are able to penetrate above that ...

Susan: That's why cos it's for women it's the ceiling, but for men it's the floor.

Mo: Yeah ... they've got more ... it's like um ... kind of represents opportunities really ... that's their top limit women and men can go above that.

JOR: Hm ... hm ... OK ... OK ... so ... what would you say then is the preferred reading of this text ... What's the preferred reading? [Pause 6.0] What you've just said is the preferred reading ... Could you say it in a sort of ... sum it up?

Mo: Um ... A natural uh ...

Lottie: It's only natural men should succeed.

Mo: Yeah.

Lottie: That it's their right to do so.

Mo: Yeah ... It's ... it's not something constructed ... It's a natural given right

[Pause 8.0]

JOR: This is similar to what uh Paola said ... is that right?

Paola: The fact the man have a natural inclination to ... um ... It's normal that they get access to uh higher ... I don't know to ... to um ... [Pause 3.0]

JOR: Higher levels ...

Paola: Yeah.

JOR: promotions

Paola: Sort of ...

JOR: ... status? ... Um ... OK ... excellent ... I think this is very interesting and you've drawn some interesting points here ... so ... if the preferred reading is 'it's only natural and right that men should succeed,' would you say generally that you agree with that as a preferred reading? [nods and murmurs of agreement] More or less ... yes? [more murmurs of yes] ... You don't have to agree with me ... Is that what you want to say? ... Yes? ... OK ... if it's the preferred reading ... then is there any sense in which what Paola called the sarcasm or ... of the text ... Does the sarcasm of the text still make you say that this is the preferred reading of the text?

Mo: That's what ... that's the uh reading that's coming through ... but ... you can ... you can ... tell ... it really ... it's like ... it's really hard to tell whether its kind of genuine and she ... she actually believed that and but she's taking on that uh tone because she is writing for GQ magazine, or whether it was really bitter and ironic.

[Everyone speaks at once]

Kate: It's on a deeper level, isn't it?

Voice: Yeah.

Lottie: She doesn't believe that she's writing ... (unclear) ...

Mary: It seems like pretending that she believes it.

Mo: It's like a ... it's kind of like a ... a reverse psychology kind of thing.

Kate: Yeah ... that's what we thought.

Lottie: I think what she's doing is ... the whole deconstructive idea that they talk about in TACO, she's doing it through the (unclear – her bit?) ... the effect ... the fact that that surface reading is so closely connected to the deconstructive reading that ... you know ... she is mocking them in sarcasm of like the 'strikers' and the 'strippers' and you know 'it's only natural' ... and the fact that they are so closely intertwined undermines her whole supposed argument that men are natural and right ... So what I'm saying is the deconstruction level is a lot closer and less ... it is much easier to find in this text ... than the result ... You get two meanings at the same time and that is why it is ambiguous.

Voice: Yeah.

JOR: OK ... I ... I certainly felt that when I read it ... that there's kind of this ambiguity going on ... but what I'm interested in here is ... if you say that is the preferred reading, what you are saying is that the text wants you to believe that ... that it's only natural and right that men should succeed ... and ... I'm just asking ... is that what you think the text is saying?

Many voices: No ... yeah ... no ... no ...

JOR: ... the text is saying that it's only natural and right that men should succeed?

Mo: That's like its cover story ... below that is about sex and sexism in the workplace.

Lottie: And she's using that to turn the other issue on its head ...

Mo: ... to turn it round ... yeah.

JOR: So below that there is this other reading ... which is about sexism ... sexism in the workplace ... and um ... could you say it? ... um ...

Lottie: It's not below it, it's equal to that argument.

JOR: It's equal to it.

Mo: But I mean like ... below as in under the surface ... kind of

JOR: Hm hm ... um ... that ...

Lottie: I don't know ... I don't know if it's under the surface though because it's just as evident as that argument is ...

JOR: OK ... so what have we got? ... It's only natural and right ... and then sort of like that's ... I don't know ... 1A say ... and we've got 1B here ... which is ... that um ... uh discrimination is ... is uh part of the .. the structure of the workplace ... and it's it's it's um constructed along ... along gender lines that women are ... are um ... discriminated against ... systematically ... that's the word I'm looking for ... they are ... they are systematically discriminated against in the workplace and ... OK ... and is the ... is the text saying that this is a thing something that is wrong?

Voices: Yes ... yes ...

JOR: OK so ...

Mary: But not so directly because if she'd moaned about it, then it'd be 'Ah there's another women moaning about inequality' ... whereas if she uses it ... takes the man respectfully and kind of ... mocks it then that's a better way of getting her point through.

Mo: It seems like if she wants to exp(unclear) herself more on an equal ... equal with men she has to ... like take the male's point of view and put women down to make herself ... to make women actually higher ... because they know ... if she puts herself down, she is sort of in there with the men ... on their level. [Pause 12.0]

JOR: So if I could just say ... summarise what you've just said Mo ... you're saying that ... that ... this ... this is ... this [1B] is between the lines of this [1A] ... or under ... just under the surface of this [1A] ... so it is wrong that there is systematic discrimination against women is under the surface of the reading 'it's only natural and right that men should succeed' ... so she's kind of like sneaking this one in under that?

Mo: Hm hm ... By doing it cleverly like that could she in a sense kind of earn respect from men by it rather than as you [Kate] said like 'Oh it's another woman moaning about sexual discrimination' ... by doing it like that she's kind of ... and especially in a men's magazine it's like bringing it down from the inside.

Susan: And it's not like she's moaning about it herself ... she's moaning about them moaning ... I would say.

Lottie: She sets herself out over the ... (unclear) ... of men.

JOR: I find this very interesting ... um ... very good points you are making here

... um ... I am just trying to ... OK is there anything else you want to say? ... I

mean the preferred reading seems to be slightly problematic then in this ... in this

... slightly ...

Voice: Completely.

JOR: Very problematic.

Paola: Yeah ... because if you look at the words she uses, you maybe ... probably

agree with 1A ... But the whole um thing that you get from reading the text is not

that one but the second one ... I think.

JOR: So you feel that the main argument ... the main purpose of this text ... the

main purpose of this text is 1B?

Paola: More than 1A ... yes (other murmurs of agreement)

JOR: More than 1A ... that's the main purpose of it ... Do you think that um ... all

right ... OK ... we don't want to run ahead of ourselves. All right, so that's ...

that's the preferred reading ... which means then that ... who's ... what ... If

there's a problem with the preferred reading ... it's problematic because there is

ambiguity inherent in it ... what about the ideal reader?

Lottie: I think the idea that we have ... I said it has to be ... concerning the title

'Gentleman's Quarterly' ... it could be an ironic ... but I often think the idea that

there's some discussing and ... (unclear) ... psychological idea of the glass ceiling

appeals to an audience of a higher intellectual awareness of these sort of issues ...

[Pause 3.0] ... I hate saying stuff like that but ... (laughs) ... I think you need to be

aware of ...

Voice: ... what the glass ceiling is ...

Lottie: Instead of taking it literally. That will be quite close behind it.

JOR: OK ... uh ...

Lottie: You pick up on the sarcasm which is an integral part of understanding point

1B ... you need to be aware of it ...

JOR: And so what sort of person would that be?

Lottie: So ... someone related to the business world or ... no not ... (unclear –

only?) ... to the business world but ... I'd say um thirties mid thirties ... actually

that's wrong because we're not mid thirties and we get it ... (laughs) ...

JOR: Well, that doesn't matter.

Kate: More mature you're saying ... [Pause 3.0]

Lottie: It's really ... just have a wider grasp on sort of abstract ...

Kate: ... issues ...

Lottie: Issues and ideas ... social ... references ... (inaudible) ... [Pause 7.0] ...

JOR: Has a wider grasp of social issues, ideas, concepts, notions ... that sort ...

that's the kind of thing?

8 Lottie: Has to be aware of the subtleties as well.

9 JOR: Right ... OK ... OK ... um ... would you say the ideal reader's male or
0 female? ... [Pause 8.0]

1 Lottie: [inaudible] on the fact that she's arguing her point in a very persuasive way
2 by using sarcasm to undercut her supposed argument ... but there's some men ...

3 Mo: But it could be ... it's for men though in the end ... like superficially men ...
4 (unclear – and women?) ... but really ...

5 Lottie: But it obviously for men because it's ... (unclear – committed?) ... to a
6 men's magazine but ...

7 Mo: Yeah ... I think ... I mean ... it is for men but women kind of need to read it as
8 well. She was intending for women to read it ... [Pause 6.0]

9 JOR: Well ... we don't know, do we? ... We can never really know what she uh
0 intended at that time ... that's why in fact I like to just ... I tend to try and just talk
1 about the text but I know it's easier to talk ... well ... the writer. But I try to talk
2 about the text ... what the text is saying because um we don't know what the writer
3 was thinking exactly ... we don't know ... um ... anyway ... OK ... is there
4 anything else you want to add to the description? I think we've covered that pretty
5 well ... um ... Actually there is something I want to say ... there is something I
6 want to say ... with with 1A and 1B ... um ... do you think that the preferred
7 reading ... if you say that 1B 'it's wrong that there is systematic discrimination
8 against women in the workplace' is the preferred reading of this text ... how
9 successful is the preferred reading in the light of 1A? ... [Pause 4.0] ... does it
10 succeed in relation to 1A?

11 Lottie: The fact that it uses 1A is a really good vehicle for making the point of 1B
12 ... because she's appealing to the men's egos.

13 JOR: But by doing that, does that undermine 1B?

14 Lottie: No.

15 Mary: It could to somebody who doesn't really understand her humour. They
16 could think that she was just saying that men should succeed and that women
17 shouldn't ... (unclear) ...

18 Mo: She's emphasising it in a way.

19 JOR: Emphasising 1B or 1A? Is it emphasising that it's wrong to ...

20 Mo: Yeah yeah ... 1A emphasises 1B ... [Pause 7.0]

21 JOR: That's interesting ... So, we've got 1A 'It's only natural and right that men
22 should succeed' and 1B 'It's wrong that there is systematic discrimination against
23 women in the workplace' ...

35 [TAPE ENDS]

7 JOR: So when you are looking at a text in terms of this analysis we're then saying
8 'what kinds of social knowledge do you need in order to understand this text?'

9 Lottie: (inaudible response)

0 JOR: Yes ... yes ... that the text assumes that you have ... yes? Issues about the
1 glass ceiling, about discrimination, about ... about well ... relationships between
2 men and women, about attitudes of men towards women and so on and so forth.

3 Paola: Like it's background.

4 JOR: Sorry?

5 Paola: Like it's background.

6 JOR: Absolutely ... it's background knowledge ... In fact for number 3, where it
7 says 'what conceptual frameworks' you could write 'what social frameworks' if you
8 want ... It means the same ... OK? ... What social frameworks. And that brings us
9 back then to the deconstructive interpretation ... [Pause 3.0] ... So ... does any
0 aspect of the text's structure as far as your analysis so far ... and I realise we
1 haven't got into this as much as we might have wanted to ... but is there anything
2 about the text that seems to contradict or undermine the text's preferred reading? ...
3 Well, if 1B is the preferred reading, does 1A undermine it?

4 Voice: I don't think it undermines it.

5 Lottie: It makes it more accessible to the reader.

6 JOR: 1A makes 1B more accessible to the reader? (Murmurs of agreement)

7 Lottie: Because 1A ... (inaudible) ...

8 JOR: I see what you mean.

9 Mo: It makes it attractive for them to read ... but then they have to be able to get
0 that that's not the actual reading though.

1 Lottie: This is the vehicle for them to get into the article ... because once they were
2 intrigued they will obviously see the discrepancies between the two ...

3 JOR: Yes ... I agree with what you've said really ... What I found interesting from
4 what you said is that if 1B is the intended reading ... this is the preferred reading
5 ... that 'it is wrong that there is systematic discrimination against women in the
6 workplace' ... My feeling is that 1A completely destroys 1B.

7 Lottie: You don't think ... either is the preferred reading?

8 JOR: Oh OK ...

9 Mary: I think you should ... (unclear) ... 1A as a kind of a sarcastic natural thing
0 ... (inaudible) ...

1 Mo: It's not ... It's not genuine ...

2 Lottie: Actually I have to agree with Mo ... with what she said before ... is that 1A
3 is the very very surface preferred reading ... that 1B she uses the whole ... that's
4 why I think this ... (inaudible) ... is interesting ... the fact that the deconstructive
5 level is not deep.

6 JOR: So do you think that this [1B] deconstructs that [1A]?

7 Many voices: Yes ... yes ...

8 JOR: Yes ... is that it?

9 Voices: Yes ..

0 Mo: Yes that's it.

1 JOR: Now that's really interesting ... a very interesting outcome I think. You see I

2 read it and I felt that that [1A] deconstructed that [1B].

3 Mo: No ... definitely ...

4 Kate: No ... I think you're right in a way ... It depends how you look at it.

5 JOR: Well ... of course it does ...

6 Kate: Because it can on the surface completely deconstruct it, can't it?

7 (inaudible) ... completely miss that.

8 JOR: All much depends on what reading you do of it ... and I think this is another

9 key point ... There's no true reading of the text ... there's no true reading ... you

0 can't say 'Oh well, that's it ... you know ... I've read it and ...' ... I felt that the 1A

1 deconstructed 1B. You're telling me that 1B deconstructs 1A ... in quite a clever

2 way.

3 Lottie: Cos as a woman I would not expect her to be damning her own sex.

4 Mo: Yeah ... exactly ...

5 Lottie: And I think she's using her awareness of that sort of deconstruction to her

6 benefit.

7 JOR: Right ... right.

8 Mo: She definitely knows what she's doing.

9 JOR: Well ... I don't know if I felt that way ... (Laughter) ... but if you were to

0 make that argument ... I mean ... that would be um ... fine ... you know ... Just

1 because I have a different reading demonstrates the whole purpose of what

2 Habermas calls the um formation of intersubjective understanding ... you know ...

3 this idea of developing knowledge over the text by comparing what we know ...

4 what we think.

5 Lottie: It's interesting that you're the only guy in the room ... (inaudible) ...

6 JOR: Yeah ... I see it the opposite way ... and ... it's not that I agree with ... my

7 problem is that I disagree personally with 1A ... I mean ... I would disagree with

8 1A because it's a form of social closure ... but I feel that the text is not successful.

9 Susan: I think she disagrees with A as well but she has to use A to get her real point

10 across.

11 JOR: Whereas I think she's sold out.

12 Mary: I don't at all ... I think she's clever ... I think she ...

13 Lottie: No because she's using ... she'll know ... because she takes the extreme as

14 being ... you know ... 'stick to your guns' and 'you can never trust anyone who has

15 to pee sitting down' ...

6 Mo: Especially ... especially ... you know it's not serious ... it's the way that she
7 talks about it ... like um ...
8 Lottie: Even men would be like 'wah ... she's pretty sexist' ... [Laughter] ...
9 JOR: Well ... my ideal reader ...
0 Mo: She refused to say at the end ... (unclear) ... so she's not serious.
1 JOR: Hm ... well my ideal reader was somebody who was reading this going 'stick
2 to your guns boys in business you can never really trust anyone who has to pee
3 sitting down' ... yes ... absolutely right ... That's the ideal reader I had in my mind
4 ... somebody who would read it and go 'too bloody true' [Laughter] ... yes? That's
5 what I felt. And I thought that GQ magazine is aimed at that kind of audience ...
6 that's my view of it.
7 Voice: Maybe.
8 JOR: It reproduces and reconstructs the very discrimination that it is supposedly
9 deconstructing ... that was my opinion but uh obviously I am wrong. But no I am
0 ... but it is an interesting one, isn't it? I liked what you said and I'm most certainly
1 going to incorporate a number of the comments that were made ... especially this
2 stuff about 1A 1B ... because I have to include what was actually said ... what did
3 people actually say?
4 Mo: Do we get a credit for it?
5 JOR: Oh ... thank you so much ... you'll almost certainly get a credit for it.
6 Mo: This is dedicated to my excellent students.
7 JOR: Yes ...
8 [SESSION ENDS]

Appendix B Critical Discourse and the Media from Week to Week

Fig. 1 Critical Discourse and the Media: Handout 1

Critical Discourse and the Media	
<p>The aim of these sessions is to introduce you to a number of perspectives in social theory and to show how these can be applied to the critical analysis of texts which come from a variety of media sources. Each week we will discuss a different 'text' and analyse it in the light of our weekly readings. I will provide the initial texts for analysis but your suggestions would also be very welcome in establishing what we look at from week to week.</p>	
Week 1 Reading:	Media culture and the triumph of the spectacle Kellner (2003b) Chapter One in <i>Media Spectacle</i>
Week 2 Reading	Language, Power and Ideology: Critical Discourse Analysis Fairclough (2001) Chapter Two in <i>Language and Power</i> O'Regan (2002) Paper: 'Knowledge Discourse and Text: Critical Reading in Academic Contexts' Seidlhofer (2003) Section 3 in <i>Controversies in Applied Linguistics</i>
Week 3 Reading	Social theory and text analysis: Foucault Best and Kellner (1991) Chapter Two in <i>Postmodern Theory</i> O'Regan (no date) PhD thesis (Extract)
Week 4 Reading	Social theory and text analysis: Adorno and Derrida Best and Kellner (1991) Chapter Seven in <i>Postmodern Theory</i> O'Regan (no date) PhD thesis (Extract)
Week 5 Reading	The public politics of the text: Habermas's public sphere Best and Kellner (1991) Chapter Seven in <i>Postmodern Theory</i> O'Regan (no date) PhD thesis (Extract)
Week 6	Reading week and poster preparation
Week 7	Case Study: 'I'm a Celebrity' TV Show¹
Week 8 Reading	Case Study: Terror War: 9/11 and its aftermath Kellner (2003) 'Terror War' http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/sept11kell.htm Borradori (2003) 'Terrorism and the legacy of the Enlightenment' in <i>Philosophy in a Time of Terror</i>
Week 9	Poster presentations

Fig. 2 Critical Discourse and the Media: Handout 2 (Extract from Student Handbook)

Critical Discourse and the Media

In these sessions you will:

- explore critical and poststructuralist theories of discourse and society
- assess the status of the text as a mode of knowledge formation and transmission
- apply critical and poststructuralist theoretical models and techniques to a range of media texts
- focus on critical discourse analysis as a problematising practice of the text and of social practices in contemporary society

Aims:

To introduce you to critical approaches to the study of texts and to the main concepts and debates surrounding this type of critical analysis.

Outline:

In these sessions we will be looking at ways of interpreting different kinds of media texts. The texts in question might be advertisements, newspaper articles, letters to editors, gossip columns or television excerpts. Media texts are of particular interest because they are amongst our most salient forms of cultural capital, framing and constructing the world we live in as well as being framed and constructed by it. Critical analysis of such texts involves looking at how this kind of construction occurs. The aim is to open a space between the representations of the text and possible alternative readings and in this way to create discussion around issues of interest in contemporary society.

Content:

Critical and poststructuralist theories of discourse and society including reference to:

- Ideology and discourse
- The critical theory of the Frankfurt School
- Derridean deconstruction
- Foucauldian notions of discourse and power
- The Habermasian public sphere
- The discursive materialism of Laclau and Mouffe
- Models of critical discourse analysis which draw on the above

The sessions will draw on a variety of different text types according to the interests of the group.

Text types for analysis could include:

TV shows, the television news, documentaries, advertisements, editorials, newspaper and magazine articles.

Week 1 Media culture and the triumph of the spectacle

I had decided that I would base the first session on Douglas Kellner's *Media Spectacle* (2003b) due to the fact that it was quite a recent text, but also because of the many interesting coincidences which exist between Kellner's work in 'critical cultural studies' and the discursive interests of CDA, particularly the CDA of Fairclough. The main problem with Kellner's approach is that he does not analyse discourse in any systematic way, although he does make many interesting observations about the operations of discourse in a world where, in his own words, 'spectacle itself is becoming one of the organising principles of the economy, of politics, of society and of everyday life' (Kellner, 2003b: 1). Since Kellner did not analyse discourse, but did analyse spectacle, it seemed appropriate that we might use the Kellner text as a background reader.

In the first session the students were introduced to the idea of 'media spectacle' and looking at media texts. This took the form of a fairly informal talk which took up some of the themes Kellner raises in his book, as well as some others which have either occurred to me or are common in texts on media and cultural studies. I talked about how we now seem increasingly to live in a world of spectacle, of 'tabloidised infotainment culture', TV reality and game shows, celebrity voyeurism, cybertechnology, and grandiose film spectacles with ever more fantastic special effects (*Gladiator*, *Troy*, *Terminator*, *Star Wars*, *Pearl Harbor*, *The Matrix*, *Spiderman*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Shrek*, etc). In this kind of society the new has a very short life-span and so the culture and technology industries must always be developing more distinctive, more 'designed', and more 'niched' products and special effects to attract consumers. But in this environment newness is fast becoming an exhaustible commodity itself; there are for example only so many colours, shapes and sizes a car, a mobile phone, or a fitted kitchen can be; only so many types of special effects which a film can contain; only so many types of violent computer games which can be played; only so many square inches of flesh that can be revealed. In a world where the new is almost immediately the bland, life experiences are increasingly pushed towards extremes. In the film, video and computer game industries this is realised in ever increasing extremes of 'realistic' product violence and bloodshed. In television, reality programmes in a bid to be more different and 'extreme' introduce ever more bizarre scenarios, games and 'tests', as well as 'freakish' participants, prepared to do and suffer anything in order to be on TV. In pornography, there are websites dedicated to every imaginable (and unimaginable) sexual proclivity. In sport, there is now a thriving range of 'extreme sports' including 'base-jumping' down mountain cliffs,

‘snowboarding’, ‘wakeboarding’, ‘BMX biking’, ‘extreme-motocross’, and even ‘extreme-ironing’ where an individual scales a suitably vertiginous peak, un-straps a portable ironing board, and is photographed ironing an item of clothing before descending. In tourism, a back-packing tour around the world is more or less compulsory for any self-respecting UK school leaver, and for the rest of us the more exotic the holiday, the better it supposedly is, in terms of personal kudos, excitement, difference and experience (see Jaworski et al, 2003; Thurlow and Jaworski, 2003).

The theme of ‘media spectacle’ in this first session was designed to raise interest in the media and in media texts, and to suggest how media texts were worth studying for the ways in which they mediate as well as project social perceptions, ideas and beliefs. It was suggested to the students that by looking at media texts we may be able to learn something about the kind of society that we live in and also reach some decisions about how we view our relationship to that society. In this way I hoped to engage the students’ interest in the module.

This introductory class as well as raising general expectations about the module also oriented students to what we would be doing from week to week as well as to what was expected of them in their assessments. I explained that the module would introduce them to some aspects of social theory in relation to some major philosophical thinkers in order to show them how their thought was relevant to the way we were going to be looking at texts, but also because they were social theorists whose work was considered very influential in relation to the way we understand the world. With regard to the assessments, one would be a 2000 word assignment to be submitted in week 7 and the other would be a poster presentation to be done in groups and displayed in class in Week 9. The written assignments included one question which allowed students to choose a text and apply a TACO framework of analysis to it. Most of the students chose to do this assignment. The assessment tasks and samples of coursework are included in Appendix C. We also discussed as a class the various issues which I had raised during my introduction and I gave them two newspaper texts to read for the following week. I also asked them to read Chapter Two of *Language and Power* and if they had time, a paper I had written which summarised some of my interests. They were also referred to Chapter One of *Media Spectacle* for further reading.

Week 2 Language, Power and Ideology: Critical Discourse Analysis

This week in the first half of the class students were introduced to some of the main themes in CDA: notions of ideology, discourse and text; discourse as a social practice; Marx's classical critique of capitalism; and some basic aspects of the TACO four dimensional view of discourse (Chapter Five: 5.3.1). This latter element created considerable discussion, especially the idea of an object world realised in discourse, and I was pleased to note that these were quite new ideas to the students which they seemed to find interesting and thought provoking. As became the norm in later sessions, the discussions of these various theoretical aspects of discourse and social analysis were supported by mind maps which highlighted the main areas of discussion and which the students were able to take away with them.

In the second half of the class we compared the two texts they had been given to read the week before. This was done in terms of how they seemed to construct their preferred readings. One text was the Sunday Express 'We owe Arabs nothing' text from Chapter Five (Fig. 3) and the other was an article from 'The Observer' (Fig. 4) entitled 'Why the West is wary of Muslims' (Will Hutton, The Observer, 11.01.04) which, in addition to being a indirect response to the Sunday Express text, sought to engage in a more considered discussion of cultural difference while condemning the militant perspectives of 'radical Islam'. Both texts appear on the following pages.

In the discussion which took place in class we were not at this point following any particular framework of analysis. Instead we looked in the more general terms at how they seemed to construct the arguments that they were making. Student's were unanimous in labelling the 'We owe Arabs nothing' text as racist and the 'Why the West is wary of Muslims' text as much more objective, if still quite critical of Islam in parts. The question I asked was, 'How do the texts do this?'; 'What is it about each text that makes you say this?'. Students responded that the way each text was written, the style of the language, the rhetorical questions, the kinds of words and expressions that the texts used, all helped to establish the main argument or perspective of each text. We discussed this and then we looked at the use of pronouns in each of the texts, especially 'we' and 'they' type pronouns. The Sunday Express text contained 756 words. Of these there were 17 incidences of 'we' type pronouns (12 'we', 4 'our' and 1 'you') and also 17 incidences of 'they' type pronouns (13 'they' and 4 'their'). All the 'they' pronouns referred to Arab peoples or states.

Fig. 3 The Express on Sunday. January 4, 2004. 'We owe Arabs nothing'

Robert Kilroy-Silk

WE ARE told by some of the more hysterical critics of the war on terror that "it is destroying the Arab world". So? Should we be worried about that? Shouldn't the destruction of the despotic, barbarous and corrupt Arab states and their replacement by democratic governments be a war aim? After all, the Arab countries are not exactly shining examples of civilisation, are they? Few of them make much contribution to the welfare of the rest of the world. Indeed, apart from oil - which was discovered, is produced and is paid for by the West - what do they contribute? Can you think of anything? Anything really useful? Anything really valuable? Something we really need, could not do without? No, nor can I. Indeed, the Arab countries put together export less than Finland.

We're told that the Arabs loathe us. Really? For liberating the Iraqis? For subsidising the lifestyles of people in Egypt and Jordan, to name but two, for giving them vast amounts of aid? For providing them with science, medicine, technology and all the other benefits of the West? They should go down on their knees and thank God for the munificence of the United States. What do they think we feel about them? That we adore them for the way they murdered more than 3,000 civilians on September 11 and then danced in the hot, dusty streets to celebrate the murders?

That we admire them for the cold-blooded killings in Mombasa (sic), Yemen and elsewhere? That we admire them for being suicide bombers, limb-amputators, women repressors? I don't think the Arab states should start a debate about what is really loathsome.

But why, in any case, should we be concerned that they feel angry and loathe us? The Arab world has not exactly earned our respect, has it? Iran is a vile, terrorist-supporting regime - part of the axis of evil. So is the Saddam Hussein-supporting Syria. So is Libya. Indeed, most of them chant support for Saddam.

That is to say they support an evil dictator who has gassed hundreds of thousands of their fellow Arabs and tortured and murdered thousands more. How can they do this and expect our respect?

Why do they imagine that only they can feel anger, call people loathsome? It is the equivalent of all the European nations coming out in support of Hitler the moment he was attacked by the US, because he was European, despite the fact that he was attempting to exterminate the Jews - and Arabs.

Moreover, the people who claim we are loathsome are currently threatening our civilian populations with chemical and biological weapons. They are promising to let suicide bombers loose in Western and American cities. They are trying to terrorise us, disrupt our lives.

And then they expect us to be careful of their sensibilities? We have thousands of asylum seekers from Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries living happily in this country on social security.

This shows what their own people think of the Arab regimes, doesn't it? There is not one single British asylum seeker in any Arab country. That says it all about which country deserves the epithet loathsome. GEORGE GALLOWAY, the member of parliament for Baghdad Central, as his tormentors describe him, called the British and American troops "wolves" and called for the Arab countries to rise up and fight them and to cut off oil from the combatants. Later he called upon British troops to

refuse to obey "illegal orders". He has, predictably, been vilified. His comments have been termed a disgrace, disgusting, outrageous and so on.

He has been called a loony, naive, gullible and a traitor. There have been demands that George's constituency party should deselect him, that his constituents should not vote for him at the next general election, and that he should be deported to Iraq. No one, as yet, has demanded that he be put in the stocks or burnt at the stake, though no doubt this will come.

But why all the fuss? Why is everyone getting into such an excitable lather over the predictable remarks of a no-mark?

Who with any sense cares an Iraqi dinar for what dear George thinks? Like Clare Short, George is a licensed court jester. He acts the buffoon while she's the straight part of the act, though she exaggerates her sanctimonious seriousness.

Neither are taken seriously. Both are totally discredited laughing stocks that add to the variety of political life. At least George is open, honest and sincere.

Fig. 4 The Observer. January 11, 2004. 'Why the West is wary of Muslims'

Will Hutton

As well as condemning racism, we must also condemn radical Islam for providing succour to terrorists

Radical Islam represents the biggest challenge to Western civilisation since the demise of fascism and communism. Rooted in a pre-Enlightenment worldview in which religious text has the force of law and the Islamic community is innately superior to all others, the belief that there is redemption for martyrs in the afterlife fuels extraordinary acts of terrorism.

Combine this with the deeply held belief that Islamic religion, culture and society has been profoundly humiliated, and you have the cocktail that one day may lead some young men and women to immolate themselves on a BA flight or on the Tube. How to understand this threat and how to respond has become the most important issue of our age.

More than two years after 11 September, the tally of core Western values and beliefs that we have allowed to become corrupted as we respond is lengthening by the week. Equality before the law; the presumption of innocence; the right to a fair trial - all have been seen as expedients to be put aside in the 'fight against terror' rather than absolute values to which we hold fast - and it has been the British Muslim community that has been on the receiving end of this new expediency more than any other. The state assembles more and more discretionary power without accountability. A scarcely disguised Islamophobia is on the increase. Long-built traditions of tolerance are under threat. We are undermining our own civilisation.

The leaders of the radical terrorist groups, and the mosques that support them, are open in what they are doing: they are launching a war of civilisations they believe they will win. It may be that Islam is currently poor and weak, but it is not degenerate like the secular West. Terrorist suicide is proof not of depravity, but of moral and cultural ascendancy. As Osama bin Laden says repeatedly, this readiness for martyrdom will eventually bring victory, whatever that may mean.

In the West, there is an uncertainty about how to respond at the level of values - lurching between a kindly multi-culturalism that anxiously wants to be sympathetic to Islam, depicting Islamic terrorism as an aberration, and the alternative view that we are on the point of a clash of civilisations. Blair and Bush perfectly reflect the uncertainty, semi-indicting Islam but hesitating to characterise their war against terrorism as part of a clash of civilisations; that is too apocalyptic. European intellectuals, who would be horrified to be included in the same camp as George Bush, agree; at the conference in Paris I am attending and which prompted this column, directors of leading European research institutes in this area insisted that there was no clash of civilisations, that Islam was pluralistic and benign, that the West was in part to blame for Islamic feelings of humiliation, and that we should maintain a belief in multiculturalism and dialogue to the last.

I share the view that Islam can be pluralistic, has the capacity to generate the secular societies we have in the West - already only a minority of European Muslims regularly attend mosques - and that the Western world has a major responsibility for what has happened. If we abandon dialogue and interaction we are lost. But I refuse to make my starting point that there is at present no potential clash of civilisations and that Islam can be wholly excused responsibility for the ideology of the terrorists. Muslim fundamentalists do believe Islam is a superior moral universe to the West - and it is that that permits terrorists to disregard of the sanctity of innocent human life and the indiscriminate way lives can be sacrificed. They are, after all, infidel.

While there are broader strains within Islam that do offer a pluralist moral code, which in turn offers hope for the future, it is also at the moment predominantly sexist and pre-Enlightenment - and that is the core of the problem both within the Islamic world and in its relationship with the West.

We cannot and should not respond with an unrigorous, soft multiculturalism that pleads such values are equivalent to our own and legitimate within their own cultural context. Nor should we fall into the trap of stereotyping Islam as universally menacing. Rather, I am at one with Professor Brian Barry, the finest egalitarian since Tawney, who, in *Culture and Equality*, argues that what lies behind the Western position on human rights and democracy is the Enlightenment proposition that men and women are intrinsically equal and have equal rights to dignity and self-realisation.

Thus, the West has to object to Islamic sexism - whether arranged marriage, headscarves, limiting career options or the more extreme manifestations, female circumcision and stoning women for adultery. We cannot give ground in the name of multiculturalism. As Barry argues, this is to deny values that are right, and in which democracy and respect for human rights are ultimately grounded. We should certainly respect diversity, but we cannot abandon or qualify our own beliefs in the process.

In this respect the French position since 11 September is much stronger and more coherent than our own because it is based on a systematic Enlightenment worldview. It is because the French believe in the international rule of law that they refused to support the intervention in Iraq; they were right.

But France is also right to insist that it will not support Islamic sexism; thus, the recent ban on wearing headscarves. Because it has taken a coherent position, it is respected and at least understood in the Islamic world, even if strongly criticised. Sheikh Tantawi of Cairo's al-Azhar mosque responded to the French move by saying that just as Westerners should respect Islamic mores when in Islam, so the Islamic community had to respect Western mores when in the West. He advised French Islamic women to comply with the French law he thought reasonable. Amen to that; diversity and interaction based on mutual respect.

In my view, the path blazed by Tantawi, Barry and the French is how we must engage with Islam - but it demands we act across the waterfront. We have to maintain equality before the law, which is why it is so important that British Islamic detainees in Guantanamo Bay are tried properly under British law. If we are to be uncompromising in our opposition to cultural manifestations of religion that menace our Enlightenment commitment to equality, such as the subordination of women, we must also defend freedom of worship. We must insist that Muslims living in Britain and Europe are equal citizens, aggressively resisting their economic and social marginalisation and all forms of discrimination.

We must also repudiate the casual quasi-racism of Robert Kilroy-Silk's that re-emerged last week in his mistakenly published column: it has no more place in our set of values than any sort of religious fundamentalism. And abroad, we stand for the same beliefs - from following UN process and upholding international law. If there is a clash of civilisations, it will only end through mutual tolerance and respect - and we earn that through standing by what we are and in what we believe, even while we respect what we are not.

The Observer text contained 1221 words. Of these there were 28 incidences of 'we' and 7 incidences of 'they', of which 4 referred to radical Islamic groups, 2 to 'France', and 1 to 'lives of westerners'.

This suggested that part of the reason why the Sunday Express text seemed extreme and even racist in comparison with the Observer text was because of the way it presented Arab peoples as 'Other': as outside and not belonging. This was in contrast to the Observer text where this form of 'Othering' of Arab peoples was entirely absent. Where 'they' type pronouns were used, they referred to very specific things and not to Arab peoples or states. The very high incidence of inclusive 'we' pronouns to refer to people in the west, rather than simply to people in Britain, also gave the text a more considered and empathetic tone, and made it seem non-nationalistic.

Other points of interest which we noted in the Sunday Express text were the incidences of truth claims which were presented in the present simple tense, the large numbers of rhetorical questions, and the types of vocabulary which were collocated with Arab peoples or states. These seemed to have had the textual effect of 'demonising' Arabs and presenting them in a negative light. For example, the text abounds in sentences of the following kind:

- Shouldn't the destruction of the **despotic, barbarous and corrupt Arab states** and their replacement by democratic governments be a war aim?
- What do **they** think **we** feel about **them**? That **we** adore **them** for the way **they** murdered more than 3,000 civilians on September 11 and then danced in the hot, dusty streets to celebrate the murders?
- That **we** admire **them** for the **cold-blooded killings** in Mombasa (sic), Yemen and elsewhere? That **we** admire **them** for being **suicide bombers, limb-amputators, women repressors**? I don't think the Arab states should start a debate about what is really **loathsome**.

By looking at some salient descriptive and representative features of these texts in this session, I tried to raise students' awareness of what might be learned by looking at texts quite closely and carefully. So, as well as reacting to the text and talking about what the text says in general terms, it was also worthwhile making a more systematic examination, or 'critical reading', of the text to see what that revealed about the way the text seemed to be constructing itself both as a textual event and as a textual element in a wider reality; in this case the reality of Western-Arab intercultural relations.

Once the idea of critical reading had been established, I was able to give each member of the class a copy of the TACO framework which I presented in Chapter Five. I asked them only to read it for the following week so that we could discuss it in class. I also gave them two other newspaper texts to read in addition to the set reading on Foucault.

Week 3

For this session I had asked them to read a modified extract from an earlier draft of this thesis on Foucault and his conceptions of power, discourse and discursive formations. In particular I wanted the students to be able to grasp the distinction he makes between positive and negative power and his conception of the way in which discourse practices construct discursive formations and realms of knowledge. But rather than suggesting that everything is discourse, I also wanted them to understand that in my own perspective I was not suggesting that the object world did not exist, only that for it to exist *for us* it has to be entered into a system of meaning relations, and that in our context this system of meaning relations was understood as discourse. This is the kind of perspective I tried to relate to the class, not asking that they agree with me, or with Foucault, but only that they understand why someone might have that perspective.

In the second half of the class we discussed a text from 'The Evening Standard' which they had been given in the previous week entitled 'Isn't this what holidays are for?' (The Evening Standard, 22.08.03) (see Fig. 5), but this time we did follow the TACO framework. The text appears on the following page. In the time available we were able to go through the four stages of the framework, but we did not address the questions under discourse features except in quite general terms. At this stage my aim was to raise awareness of the main areas of the framework, and how the framework could be used for the purposes of a critical reading. In this session I used my own general analysis of the text to highlight various aspects of the framework.

Fig. 5 The Evening Standard. August 22, 2003. 'Isn't this what holidays are for?'



Friday, 22 August 2003

What Hutton has found

THE HUTTON inquiry, on the basis of its proceedings so far, is being conducted with due thoroughness. The latest revelations about Dr David Kelly's fears that the connections of his Iraqi contacts might one day leave him "dead in the woods" are intriguing, but their full significance remain to be ascertained. However, they do at least suggest how far the inquiry has ranged in attempting to understand the events that preceded his death. Some confusion remains about whether the inquiry is taking the place of a coroner's inquest, and why, in that case, witnesses are not under oath. This point ought to be clarified by Lord Hutton. But he has so far presided with forensic skill over the inquiry. Where doubts remain on testimony, notably that of Alastair Campbell over the wider questions of his role in the affair, we can expect witnesses to be recalled. Ahead of next week's appearances by the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary and John Scarlett, chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, the overall picture remains that Dr Kelly was used as a football in what became a grudge match between Downing Street and the BBC. For three key players, important material has emerged. First, Alastair Campbell. While Downing Street's communications chief clearly played a role — its exact nature still in question — in the drafting of the Government's controversial September dossier, no evidence whatsoever has yet been produced to support the specific accusation that he inserted the claim that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction could be deployed in 45 minutes — or that he believed it to be false. Second, the Ministry of Defence. Sir Kevin Tebbit, Permanent Secretary, demonstrated a proper concern for Dr Kelly's welfare, testifying that he avoided giving Dr Kelly's name to Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon and to Alastair Campbell until he was overridden. But questions do remain about the approach of this vast department towards its employees — the heavily bureaucratic ethos seems to have blinded some there to the stress the scientist was undergoing. Mr Hoon still has much to answer for. He insisted on dragging Dr Kelly before a televised Foreign Affairs Committee, perhaps because he was incapable of standing up to the pressure from Number 10 to expose the mole. Finally, the most telling disclosure of the week has been the email from Jonathan Powell, Tony Blair's chief of staff. It said the dossier established no motive for Saddam to attack the West. As Mr Powell added, there was a respectable case for war based on Saddam's continuing development of WMD since 1998 and his non-compliance over 12 years with UN resolutions. With hindsight, the government would have done much better to stick to this than to talk of the threat from a WMD capability whose extent now looks limited. When Mr Blair appears as a witness, we hope Lord Hutton will ask why the Prime Minister made so much of the dossier in his September address to Parliament. Mr Blair was, we heard this week, personally involved in decisions about how to handle the mole hunt in the MoD. It is only right that he should give the fullest possible account now that the consequences have proved so tragic.

Road rage

TEMPERS ARE set to rise this weekend for would-be rail users and drivers alike. Britain's roads are expected to clog up with a third more cars than usual as much of the rail network closes down for repairs. The millions heading to sports events, music festivals, tourist hotspots or airports will be forced onto the roads by shutdowns on routes from Paddington, on the West and East Coast main lines and to Stansted airport. Of course, fewer people travel by train over August Bank Holiday weekend than on an ordinary weekday. No-one familiar with the dire state of the railways can lightly dismiss Network Rail's assurances that weekend closures are a better and cheaper way to get repairs done than overnight work. But surely we could have been warned earlier of the shutdowns. Why couldn't those responsible have done a better job of alerting tourism and sporting bodies to their plans? And why not a decent publicity campaign to ensure the rest of us didn't have to find out at the last minute?

Party mood

EVERY YEAR there are stories about financial and security problems facing the Notting Hill Carnival. Yet it has become the biggest street celebration in Europe, and London would be a poorer place without it. All a carnival needs to succeed is the enthusiasm of those who attend it. That is guaranteed — and some fine weather, which the Met Office reckons likely, will help lift spirits. Enjoy the party.

Young Brits have been misbehaving by the Med. One writer says it may be revolting but the buttoned-up British seem to need this sort of outlet

Isn't this what holidays are for?

IBIZA. Ayia Napa. Faliraki. After years of hard work and slow nights, the clubs and bars of yet another erstwhile "sleepy fishing village" in the Mediterranean have hit pay dirt. The locals have been building pressure, trying ever more outrageous stunts to attract the young crowds, and suddenly it has worked, the dam has burst, and there has become the place for young people to go wild this summer holiday.

It's not everyone's idea of a good time: teenagers getting staggering drunk and snogging in bars, huge, noisy, drunken groups shouting, falling down and taking off their clothes, having sex in public places. But it is how large numbers of young British people like to spend their holidays.

And since, softened with alcopops, these badly behaved young people are easily parted from their sticky pockets of euros, bar and club owners like them, too.

The formula has become highly successful: like 18-30 holidays, everyone knows what's on offer. Tour operators are offering youth packages: bed, breakfast and loss of control.

You go for two weeks, herded and goaded along by the reps, who tell you which bar to drink in and when to move on. (Don't expect to find any tourists with phrase books; the streets in Faliraki have been renamed "Bar Street" and "Club Street" to help with orientation.)

YOU get steaming drunk and you're bound to find a girl who is drunk enough to have sex with you without remembering your name. The next night, you come back and do it all again. The whole point is to behave as badly as you can without causing permanent damage.

The British press is loud with disapproval as our yob culture gets us a bad name in yet another country. But the grown-up public loves nothing more than to read about the disgraceful conduct of other people's children.

The television series *Club Reps* shows these resorts in all their Technicolor awfulness, with boys boasting about how drunk they got and girls talking about how many blokes they slept with.

It's like the Japanese enthusiasm for watching people eat live creepy-crawlies: we can't



Faliraki street-life: youthful excess will always find its place in the sun



by Clare Longrigg
Writer and broadcaster

get enough of it. The same goes for the wild reputation of holiday resorts. Anyone mentioning Ibiza is bound to stress the outrageous excesses of Club Manumission, featuring sex on stage.

Imagine the disappointment of a red-blooded teenager going on holiday in the Mediterranean and finding themselves in an actual fishing village, with old fellows mending their nets on the quayside?

After holiday reps at Faliraki were arrested for leading crowds of youths on bar crawls, it was reported that there was "some confusion in the tourist industry". The

locals, who had been begging tour companies to bring them their unruly clients for years, are apparently turning against them.

The hugely successful marketing of uncontrolled fun had made bar and club owners rich, mused the reps, what was their problem? A girl taking part in a "Miss Bottom 2003" contest was arrested for taking off her top — someone was missing the joke.

The people of Faliraki have discovered that they don't want this holiday crowd at any price, and that is their prerogative. Next year, the untamed youth will find another place in the sun. I once heard a

British lad asking, genuinely curious, why you would want to eat before going to the pub?

Surely that would slow down the effects of alcohol, and what would be the point of that? The great British yob's idea of a good night out goes beer, kebab, throw up: that's the routine. It's all about overdoing it.

It's not entirely surprising that the licensing laws, and their accompanying cries of Last Orders, have not yet been deregulated: they have fostered the compressed drinking habits of the British, encouraging binge boozing by giving people a time limit.

Our licensing laws also encourage binge spending, as punters strive to put away as much booze as they can before the bell.

Our idea of fun is to hold back and then let loose for a limited time, and then fall over. This principle is particularly effective when applied to a two-week summer break in unaccustomed heat.

BE SIDES the endless fascination of other people's revolting behaviour, there is a lot to be said for overdoing it. When was the last time you woke up on New Year's Day without a hangover? Or got in the shower after the first day of your beach holiday without feeling the sting of sunburn? Or kept the address of the man with whom you had a holiday fling?

In a nation famous for buttoning-up, there has to be a time for letting go, and the consequent shame is all part of the fun.

We love watching public misdemeanours by the likes of DJ Chris Evans and Johnny Knoxville, the sort of behaviour that makes us cringe but at the same time induces some inkling of admiration. He barked off work and got drunk for a week? Wow! He put wasabi sauce up his nose for a dare? Whoa!

Laddish behaviour is celebrated as much by those who don't indulge in it themselves as those who do.

When you're young, holidays are about letting go, splashing out, doing things you wouldn't normally do: riding a motorbike without a helmet, skinny dipping in the ocean at night, having a fling with the diving instructor.

You might regret the things you do, but you're far more likely to regret the things you don't.

'Our idea of fun is to hold back, let loose for a limited time, then fall over. This principle is particularly effective on a two-week summer break'

Faliraki Analysis

Evening Standard Friday, 22 August 2003

Isn't this what holiday's are for? By Clare Longrigg

1. Descriptive interpretation

- What is the frame of the text (where does it start and finish, what is included in it)?

Banner headline

Main headline

Main text

Picture with caption

Picture of writer plus name and occupation

Citation from main text at the bottom of the page

- How does the text look (pictures, words, colours, photographs, drawings, arrangement)?

Central picture surrounded by text in columns.

- What is the topic?

Young British people going on holiday to a Greek town known as Faliraki.

- How is the topic being presented (e.g. formal, informal, persuasive, aggressive, angry, friendly, humorous, political, etc)?

Fairly informal, colloquial, suggestions of humour; efforts at persuasion - 'we've all done it at one time or the other' is implied.

- What is the preferred reading (the main message of the text; the reading which accords with the way the text seems to want to be read; the reading of minimal consensus)?

Doing things (anything!) you wouldn't normally do is what holidays are for.

British people need this kind of outlet because their culture requires them to be emotionally reserved.

Faliraki people only have themselves to blame for turning the town into a holiday camp for excessive and extreme British behaviour.

Excessive behaviour is a normal part of growing up.

Voyeurism is normal: wanting to read about/watch scandal, misbehaviour etc.

- Who might be the ideal reader of this text? E.g. A person who ...

A person who would agree with the above statements.

A young person who wishes to project an image of themselves as exciting, alternative, extroverted, fun to be with (anything but predictable, introverted and boring)

Young professionals who enjoy 'spectacle' culture and behaviour (drinking, clubbing, partying, lots of friends, casual sex, starring in their life story).

Office workers in 9 to 5 jobs.

Older adults who recognise their younger selves in the descriptions of the text.

2. Representative interpretation

- What social values can be attached to the discourse features of the text (image/vocabulary/grammar/genre)?

- Does the text refer to the writer and/or the reader?

There are no references to the writer, but there are many to the reader.

3. Social Interpretation

- What conceptual frameworks is the text a part of (e.g. worklife, homelife, gender, race, economy, business, politics, family, class, income, age, sex, property, geography etc)?

Leisure, recreation, holidays, youth culture (sex, drink, music, party life), income, age, geography

- What typical kinds of social knowledge do these frameworks suggest? What do you need to know to understand this text (about life, about the world)?

Holidays are for relaxation and enjoyment

For young people enjoyment must be spectacular enjoyment

Money, leisure and sex are closely associated in western societies.

Your success in life depends in part on the extent to which you succeed in participating in 'spectacle events' and are seen by others to participate in them.

Success in spectacle events is also an indicator of financial success. You demonstrate that you can afford to have 'spectacle' holidays.

Mass culture is voyeuristic. People enjoy reading about the misbehaviour and scandal of 'others'.

Holiday resorts in the Mediterranean are designed by local people to attract the worst kinds of people.

Holiday resort culture is an excess culture.

4. Deconstructive interpretation

- Does any aspect of the text's internal structure appear to contradict or undermine the text's preferred reading?
- Doing things (anything!) you wouldn't normally do is what holidays are for.
- British people need this kind of outlet because their culture requires them to be emotionally reserved.
- Faliraki people only have themselves to blame for turning the town into a holiday camp for excessive and extreme British behaviour.
- Excessive behaviour is a normal part of growing up.
- Voyeurism is normal. Wanting to read about/watch scandal, misbehaviour etc.

Use of general 'you'

You go for two weeks

You get steaming drunk

You're bound to find a girl who is drunk enough to have sex with you

The text seems to distance the writer from involvement in the holidays being described in the text. There is an incompatibility between the preferred reading and the use of 'You'. But also note use of 'Our' in the third column: 'Our licensing laws'; 'our idea of fun'. The generalisation to an inclusive pronoun seems disingenuous.

The personalisation of 'finding a girl to have sex with you' is at odds with picture of Clare Longrigg, who is a woman. In the social interpretation of the text, Longrigg would probably not be thought of as a lesbian.

The picture of young women partying in Faliraki and enjoying themselves conflicts with the male gendering of the text, where the focus is young male excess.

'The great British yob's idea of a good night out goes beer, kebab, throw up: that's the routine. It's all about overdoing it' (column 3).

The theme of 'othering', i.e. that it is 'others' who do these things undermines the general reading in which all British people are included. It also undermines the arguments which suggest that the behaviour described is normal.

The text is a response to complaints about the anti-social behaviour of young British people holidaying in a small Greek resort known as Faliraki. The preferred reading is that excessive behaviour is exactly what holidays are for because they provide an outlet which is not normally available in Britain where people in their daily lives are expected to be more emotionally reserved. The text also suggests that it is the people of Faliraki, and other resorts like it, who are to blame for allowing their town to be turned into a holiday resort for young British people in which excessive drinking and behaviour are encouraged. The text also argues that such excessive behaviour is a normal part of growing up. A final related argument is that: 'the grown up public loves nothing more than to read about the disgraceful conduct of other people's children' (para. 7). This seems to suggest that voyeurism and wanting to read about scandal and misbehaviour is normal for British people.

In my view the text allows for the possibility of a deconstructive interpretation for a number of reasons. First, the use of the general pronoun 'you', used exclusively, seems problematic to a text which seems to want to speak for British people as a whole. This usage has the effect, for example, of distancing the presumed writer of the text, Clare Longrigg, from any personal involvement in the holidays being described.

- You go for two weeks (para. 5)
- You get steaming drunk (para. 6)
- You're bound to find a girl who is drunk enough to have sex with you (para. 6)

There seems to be an incompatibility between the reading that this is what all British people do and the apparent exclusive use of the pronominal 'you'. This exclusivity is reinforced by the fact that the author of the text is also apparently a woman and so 'finding a girl who is drunk enough to have sex with you' does not presumably include Clare Longrigg, who seems unlikely to be constructed as a lesbian in the social interpretation of the text. Another problematic aspect is that the central picture of young women partying in Faliraki and enjoying themselves conflicts with the male gendering of the text where the focus seems to be young *male* excess. For example: 'The great British yob's idea of a good night out goes beer, kebab, throw up: that's the routine. It's all about overdoing it.' (column 3). The theme of 'Othering', i.e. that it is 'others' who do these things rather than the writer (and perhaps readers of the Evening Standard who identify with her), undermines the more general reading in which all British people are supposedly included.

Week 4 Social theory and text analysis: Adorno and Derrida

The main reading for this week was another modified extract from Chapter Four of this thesis on the thought of Adorno and Derrida. The students had also received a copy of the relevant chapter from Best and Kellner (1991), which includes a discussion of Adorno. In this session students were introduced to immanent critique and deconstruction as they have been adapted to a TACO framework of critical reading. The main purpose of this session was to help the students to understand how the different stages of the framework had been formulated. We therefore discussed Adorno's view of the object and his 'constellations' perspective, and we discussed Derrida's principles of critical reading and how these translated into the four stages of the framework. I also emphasised that the deconstructive interpretation was not compulsory and that it did not matter if they could not detect a possible deconstructive reading; that just being able to pass through the first three stages meant that they had attempted something just as important, which was a 'discursive mapping' of the text, and this also constituted a critical reading. In the second part of the session we looked more closely at the discourse features section of the framework: image, vocabulary, grammar and genre. I do not feel enough time was devoted to this during the course, particularly in relation to the grammatical aspects of the framework, as the data has shown. Nevertheless, we did discuss all the aspects of this part of the framework and what each of the questions referred to. The text for this week was the 'Goodness and Greed' text which has been included in Chapter Four.

Week 5 The public politics of the text: Habermas's public sphere

In this session we discussed in simplified terms, relevant 'public sphere' perspectives of Habermas. In the second half of the class, we discussed the GQ Text which is the subject of Chapter Six. For discussion of this class see Chapter Six.

Week 7 Case Study: The 'I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here' TV Show

I had asked in week 5 what the students might like to look at in Week 7. I had purposely left a space in the weekly schedule to see if there was any topic in particular that the students would like to discuss. On British television at the time there was a reality TV programme called 'I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here' and it was popularly suggested that we might look at this. Some of the international students were not familiar with this programme but they did not object to it as a topic. We all therefore agreed that we would watch at least one episode of the programme in week 6. I also said that I would video one of these broadcasts so

that we could all watch it in the first half of the class and then discuss it in the second half. This episode could then be our 'text' for that session.

The 'I'm A Celebrity' TV programme is a somewhat ludicrous concept in which a group of minor 'celebrities' familiar to a UK television audience spend a series of weeks in a specially prepared outdoor camp with very little in the way of home comforts in the middle of the Australian outback. They have to live in tents, deal with the heat and humidity, and with all the usual inconveniences associated with camping out, such as insects, snakes, mosquitoes, and so on. There were ten celebrities in the show; these included for example a British peer with a conviction for fraud, a 'Page 3' topless model with surgically enhanced breasts, an ex-footballer, a TV news correspondent, a 'disc jockey', a 'soap opera' actress, and a pop singer. The celebrities in addition to having to deal with the discomforts of living in a jungle environment and having their every move filmed and beamed more or less live to the UK, were each expected to submit themselves to a series of tests which would determine how much food members of the camp would receive each day. For example, in the programme we watched in class, Jenny Bond, a television news 'Royal Correspondent', had to spend ten minutes in a steel 'coffin' buried under the ground. After a couple of minutes water was allowed to enter the chamber as well as what looked to be approximately 30 to 40 rats who proceeded to crawl all over her in the dark. For every minute she remained entombed without shouting out the title of the show she 'won' a meal for each member of the camp. At the end of each week TV audiences were invited to vote off their least favourite celebrity until the point was reached where there would be just one celebrity left, who would be declared the winner.

The series generated huge quantities of tabloid media coverage in which every minute of the celebrities' time in the camp was dissected and 'salivated' over. 'The Sun' newspaper prided itself on being the 'official newspaper' of the show and, as well as detailing the antics of all the members of the camp, also included a daily item entitled 'Boob Watch' in which every glimpse of the topless model's breasts was logged:

BOOB WATCH

The sun has got his hat on - and Jordan's come out to play. After two days of sodden boredom the boobs are back. Jungle queen Jordan led the way in her fabulous white bikini. And seeing two Aussie rangers trying to squeeze her inflatables into a wetsuit for the Bush Tucker Trial had to be seen to be believed. (The Sun, 05.02.04)

As well as watching one episode of the programme, I had also photocopied a double page spread from The Sun, of which 'Boob Watch' was one item, for distribution to the class. The class did not follow the TACO framework closely. One reason for this was that the visual material was lengthy, over an hour long, and for it to be analysed systematically via the TACO framework some decisions about framing, presentation and transcription needed to be made. This was not done mainly because the students wanted to discuss the programme rather than a framed extract from the programme, and also because I thought we could still use the framework as a general structuring device for the discussion.

One of the main issues which came out of the discussion was how the celebrities were shown to be 'normal' people and also that the way the camp was constructed gave the impression of the celebrities as being like 'laboratory rats'. This was because the two British comedian presenters of the programme 'Ant and Dec' presented the show from a specially constructed aerial plateau high above the camp at the top of one side of a narrow valley. The camp was situated at the bottom of the same valley and so there were many occasions in the programme when the presenters were pictured 'ideally' situated high above the camp on an 'eyrie-like' platform, or on a rope bridge suspended across the valley, talking about the 'real' activities and situations of the camp members on the valley floor below.

In relation to the social interpretation, the main theme that seemed to come through was how 'normal' and 'ordinary' these celebrities were. They all seemed to have 'the usual' human foibles and emotions, and exhibited 'normal' fears and anxieties. A particular lifeworld frame and script related to the supposedly burgeoning relationship between the 'Page 3' model, Jordan, and the pop singer, Peter Andre, whose mutual glances, shared jokes, intentional and accidental physical contact, and generally flirtatious behaviour led to considerable coverage in the UK tabloid press. In the programme and in the press it seemed that a lifeworld frame of 'sexual attraction' or 'seduction' was being promoted with the following stereotyped 'mating script' accompanying it:

- A man and a woman are attracted to one another
- They allow themselves to be physically close to one another
- They touch accidentally, and intentionally
- The woman is more reticent
- The man is more forward
- The woman resists the man's forwardness

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- The man perseveres
 - The woman continues to resist
 - The man still perseveres
 - After some further resistance the woman eventually succumbs to the man

This script was played out on a daily basis both in the press and in the relationship between the model Jordan and the singer Andre in the programme.

The students were not convinced that there was a deconstructive interpretation which could be derived from the programme. My own view was that the projection of the celebrities' 'ordinariness' in surroundings which were anything but ordinary in fact had the opposite effect; it made the celebrities more 'extraordinary' and 'celebrity-like'. In other words, their 'non-ordinary' status as celebrities rather than ordinary people was enhanced by the show. This seemed problematic to the 'discourse of ordinariness' which was being used by the programme presenters, as well as the TV executives and makers of these types of programmes, to legitimate it. That many of these celebrities have either relaunched their careers or have become still more 'famous' and financially successful since the show ended would seem to confirm this.

Week 8 Case Study: Terror War: 9/11 and its aftermath

I chose this topic because since the destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York in September 2001, world affairs have been dominated by the discourse of Bush's 'War on Terror' which most recently has resulted in a war in Iraq and the occupation of that country by US, British and other 'allied' forces. It therefore seemed appropriate that 'Terror War' should be a part of this module.

For this class we started by looking at a series of photographic stills of the attack on the 'Twin Towers'. These were projected as a 'slide show' and remembering an oddly apposite song which had been written for a very different context and era I played the poet/singer Gil Scott Heron's 'The Revolution Will Not Be Televised' as a kind of 'soundtrack' accompaniment to the pictures. This includes such lines as:

The revolution will not be brought to you by Xerox
in four parts without commercial interruption ...
The revolution will not be brought to you by the
Schaefer Award Theatre and will not star Natalie
Wood and Steve McQueen or Bullwinkle and Julia

The revolution will not give your mouth sex appeal ...
 ... The theme song will not be written by Jim Webb,
 Francis Scott Key nor sung by Glen Campbell, Tom
 Jones, Johnny Cash, Englebert Humperdinck or The
 Rare Earth. The revolution will not be televised
 The revolution will not be right back after a message
 about a white tornado, white lightning, or white
 people
 You will not have to worry about a germ in your
 bedroom, the tiger in your tank, or the giant in your
 toilet bowl
 The revolution will *not* go better with Coke
 The revolution will not fight germs that can cause
 bad breath
 The revolution will not put you in the driver's seat
 The revolution will not be televised, will not be
 televised, will not be televised
 The revolution will be no re-run brothers
 The revolution will be *live*

(Gil Scott Heron, 1974; from the LP 'The Revolution Will Not Be Televised')

The stills against which this song was played recorded various scenes from the moment of the first plane hitting the North Tower to the collapse of both towers and the ensuing chaos in the surrounding streets. The final still showed a view from space of a long plume of smoke rising from New York which, due to the scale of the picture, appeared as a small promontory on the US coastline.

My reasons for showing these images juxtaposed with this particular song were that this 'revolution' *was* televised, and it *was* 'live'. Moreover, it was so spectacularly live that it didn't seem real. It looked like just another disaster movie with its own 'super-realistic' special effects. Watching it you had the expectation of cuts to action shots of the lead actors dealing with the disaster just as had happened in films like 'The Towering Inferno', 'Die Hard' and 'Pearl Harbor', that the news anchors in New York reporting on the scene would turn out to be played by actors, that you had in fact turned on the television in the middle of a film. I gave students a copy of the lyrics of the song and then, at their request, we played the slides and the song again. We then shared our impressions of 9/11 and what had happened since.

One of the points which we discussed was how in contrast to the title of Heron's song this event was framed by the overriding compulsion on the part of national and international television networks (e.g. Fox, CNN, BBC, ITN, NBC) to ensure that 'The Revolution *Was* Televised'; that not only would every second of the drama be beamed out, but that the attacks

would dominate the air waves for weeks afterwards. This also had the effect that the response to the attacks resulted in the proliferation of new vocabularies ('weapons of mass destruction', 'WMD', 'War on Terror', '9/11', 'Terror cells', 'Al Qaeda', 'Ground Zero', 'Axis of Evil', 'Operation Infinite Justice') and new geographies (Jalalabad, Mosul, Tora Bora, Tikrit, Kandahar, Basra) which had either not existed or few of us had been conscious of prior to the attack, and which now may suggest their own social frames of reference usually connected with scripts of violence, war, terror and destruction.

We also discussed how Bush's discourse since the attacks has been characterised by oppositions between 'good' and 'evil', 'bravery' and 'cowardice', 'civilisation' and 'barbarism', 'freedom' and 'fear'. Where Americans are 'brave', the people who attacked the 'Twin Towers' are 'cowards' even though their suicides were extraordinary acts of 'bravery' as well as 'faith' (cf. Kellner, 2003b). We also viewed as well as read some of the statements which Bush made on the day and in the days after the 9/11 attacks as a means of highlighting some of these themes, especially the theme of 'freedom' which has become so prominent since that time, and which has been used to justify almost all of the policy decisions of the US government in relation to the 'War on Terror'. I asked the class if they thought there was a deconstructive reading which could be made of 'freedom' as George W. Bush seemed to use it in his statements, but this was a difficult question for them. After discussing this for a while one of the interesting issues that arose was that on the whole the students had no knowledge at all of, for example, the history of the Cold War and US foreign policy towards Communist and anti-Communist regimes during this period. How the US government at that time would support and give financial aid to often brutal and murderous regimes if they advocated US foreign policy interests. Regimes like Batista's Cuba, Pinochet's Chile, Branca's Brazil, and Somoza's Nicaragua. In today's 'Terror War' the continued political and human rights abuses of the governing regimes in for example Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan are also ignored because they have aligned themselves with the US policy on terror. The students also had little knowledge or awareness of the histories of the Middle East, Africa, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq where, over many years, US foreign policy has been directed towards the destabilisation of regimes which are deemed to be opposed to US interests, and which has been the direct and indirect source of innumerable regional conflicts and civil wars with considerable consequences for the political, cultural and economic stability of these regions today.

This lifeworld knowledge naturally affects the way I interpret Bush's statements. The students lack of knowledge obviously affected their interpretations of them too. My view is that Bush's concept of freedom is self-deconstructing because it takes as 'Given' that the only true freedom is US capitalist freedom. That is, it constructs US capitalist freedom as a universalising truth claim. It therefore operates on the basis of using that conception of freedom as an organising principle in its interpretation of the so-called 'War on Terror'. In this discourse environment any kind of suppression or invasion of the civil liberties of individuals (e.g. 'Homeland Security') and any kind of violence against persons (e.g. in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in the Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay detention centres) is legitimated by backward reference to this conception. In this respect the discourses of Bush and bin-Laden are identical. They both legitimate their actions in the interests of a higher claim to truth.

Week 9 Poster presentations

In this week students presented the posters which they had done in groups for the second part of the assessment. The instructions for this assessment are included in Appendix C. The topics which the students chose to present were the following:

- Oxford Brookes Student Union Elections
- Cosmetic Surgery Advertising
- Barbie and Ken: The Representation of Gender Relations through the Media
- Media Constructions of the United Kingdom

These were displayed around the classroom so that the other groups could see them and ask questions about them, and I could go round asking my own questions and deciding on what mark to give them. This session was largely devoted to the posters and a brief evaluation of the module. In the evaluation students were asked to give anonymous feedback regarding what they thought of the module as a learning experience by responding to four questions:

1. What things did you like about the module?
2. What did you not like about the module?
3. Do you have any suggestions for things that could be changed?
4. Any other comments?

A composite of their evaluative comments are included below.

Poster commentaries

An additional part of the poster assessment was that each student was required to submit a short typed summary of their personal contribution to production of the poster for their group. It also asked them to give their opinions on using the TACO model. These summaries are included in Appendix C.

Allowing for the possibility that students would say that the TACO framework was very useful whether they thought so or not, there were nevertheless a number of interesting comments made by the students in relation to the framework.

Susan: By analysing the texts using the TACO model we have developed through the module, I have come to realise a lot more in texts than I had previously done, especially in such things as magazine articles. With the idea of the preferred reader in mind, more questions into the text are opened and answered by analysing it through TACO.

Mo: In using the TACO model of analysis, I found it far more straightforward to deconstruct a text, but breaking it down into smaller pieces to uncover the themes and agendas which the language, and also images, both appear to be representing and also unconsciously undermining at the same time. The TACO links to the idea of a 'public sphere' was particularly relevant to our University election theme, as well as the instances of transtextuality in both texts.

Ella: In my opinion using the critical discourse approach to texts is a highly effective method. The way in which TACO breaks down the analysis into individual, concise sections enables the analyst to have a deeper understanding of both the text being studied and TACO itself. This particular method is also effective because it enables you to adequately discuss each section just because each section that should be under discussion is clearly identified and described.

Cathie: I think that the TACO model is effective for analysing texts, especially media texts, because there is often a great deal more being said than meets the eye. It is only when you actually study the text 'as a critical object' that many of these underlying messages become apparent. Although it is fascinating, it is also scary to think (sic) how we are being influenced everyday by things we think do not affect us at all! This is an easy model to use because it divides the points into separate

sections so that the analysis has an underlying structure and covers (sic) a wide range of points, from layout to grammatical structures.

Lottie: I found the fluidity of the TACO model particularly constructive, as it can be applied to any text, whether it is a newspaper article, advertisement, even a person. Its malleable concept and philosophical foundations means it can offer greater meaning and understanding to a variety of topics besides discourse analysis.

Natsuko: Using TACO is very effective to analyse articles, text or advertisement. Since it has many guides, it makes it easier to think and know about the main idea or actual meaning of articles etc. If I did not have TACO, I would have missed a lot important messages of texts. I might still get brief ideas of articles without it but it would be like 'I just read it'. After TACO was introduced, I started to read articles more carefully to understand its real meaning.

Carla: I found it interesting to use the suggested procedure for analysing texts (the TACO model) because it is a way to look at the text more closely and to find in the text some aspects that often the reader does not consider.

Paola: What I found particularly interesting in the critical approach to discourse analysis is that it focuses on the analysis of the text itself rather than trying to find the message the "author/writer" wants to convey, even if one tends to talk about the "author/writer". One of the strengths of it, I reckon, is the fact that it does not claim to offer *the* interpretation of the text, but it allows everyone to critically reflect on it. Through the TACO analysis, it is possible to challenge even what in the text seems to be completely coherent. Although not all the texts lend themselves to a deconstructive analysis, it is interesting to see how the internal structure of the text itself sometimes concurs to destabilise the message it appears to want to convey.

From these comments it seems that many students found the framework reasonably easy to use. Mo, Ella, Cathie, Lottie, Natsuko, Carla and Paola all suggest this in different ways. Cathie's comment that she found the model easy to use 'because it divides the points into separate sections so that the analysis has an underlying structure' is a useful one in terms of the aims of the framework. Paola's comments on the importance of what the text seems to be doing rather than on what the 'author/writer' might have intended, as well as her observations on producing possible deconstructive interpretations suggest that she has successfully assimilated some of the key principles and concepts which inform this approach. This seems also to be the case with a number of the other students who refer to the usefulness of concepts

like the ‘preferred reader’, ‘public sphere’ and ‘transtextuality’. It’s possible that Susan means ‘preferred reading’, but she may also be suggesting ‘ideal reader’. Which is meant is not clear from her text. Mo’s reference to the ‘*transtextuality*’ of the text is my own rewording the Bakhtinian notion of ‘*intertextuality*’ (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986; Kristeva, 1986). All texts are echoes of past texts, but ‘transtextuality’ emphasises that these relations are multiple rather than binary, which is what ‘*intertextuality*’ seems to imply. Transtextuality therefore refers to the phenomenon that all texts are multiply constructed mosaics of other texts. That they are ‘*transtextured*’ from the many rather than ‘*intertextured*’ from the ‘two’.

Although there is evidence that students have found the TACO framework useful, some comments also suggest perspectives which run counter to the kind of textual perspective I was trying to develop. For example, Mo seems to conflate deconstruction with the more general act of critical reading; i.e. she seems to suggest that all texts may be deconstructed, which was something I had been careful not to imply. On the other hand, her use of the word ‘deconstruct’ may also simply be a useful cover term for the process of critical reading, rather than a reference the deconstructive interpretation of the text.

Natsuko says that ‘If I did not have TACO, *I would have missed a lot important messages of texts*. I might still get brief ideas of articles without it but it would be like ‘I just read it’. After TACO was introduced, I started to read articles more carefully *to understand its real meaning*’ (my emphasis). This seems to suggest that for Natsuko there are intentionally ‘hidden’ messages in texts which the TACO framework has helped her to detect. I had been careful not to suggest this during the course. That she is looking for alternative meanings in the text is however a positive sign that she perhaps has a greater awareness of texts and their meanings than she had before.

Evaluation

Another source of student attitudes to the module are the comments which they included in their evaluation forms. These were based around four brief questions. Students completed these in class in week 9 and they then each placed their form inside the same envelope. I did not go around and collect their forms from them. The forms were anonymous and because I was not familiar with their handwriting I could not be certain who was responsible for the particular comments which were made. I hoped that students would feel relatively free to express what they thought. A composite of their responses follows:

What things did you like about the module?

- The topics covered such as ‘terror war’ evoked lots of response from the class – relevant and nice to have a small group, good for discussion and more friendly. I liked the group work, interesting to choose your own topic.
- The discussion aspect of the course, debating certain issues, the fact that we can freely express our opinions and experiences, the different media angles – TV, Newspapers, Internet. Especially enjoyed ‘Terror War’ discussions.
- I liked the structure of the sessions with the theory first and then the application to various types of discourse. I also enjoyed the group discussion aspect of the classes.
- I enjoyed the range of topics and looking at things that were current in the media.
- It was really very interesting and important for my job.
- Analysis of media texts through TACO model
- Analysis of texts as using TACO
- Discussions of articles, texts in class
- I enjoys listening to the lecture, especially the discussion part is interesting. I like when we discuss about Terrorist and the teacher showed about the twins tower.
- Learning about the various theories and doing the case study on the terror war.
- The variety. Theory to back up media analysis.
- Lively discussion-based lectures

What did you not like about the module?

- I found the theorists the least interesting about the course, probably as it was quite complicated and found it tricky at first to grasp.
- I sometimes found the theory quite complicated and difficult to tie together ... but the mind maps did help break down the density of the theories.
- Some of the theories of CDA were slightly hard to comprehend. (At times rather boring – sorry.)
- Nothing.
- Too philosophical/theoretical texts/reading material
- Nothing but the class was very difficult for me
- A lot of papers to read
- Option on TACO for essay, then TACO analysis for poster presentation as well so could just focus on TACO ...

Do you have any suggestions for things that could be changed?

- Recycle all the handouts at the end of the course.

-
- Slightly more examples of texts
 - No
 - More analysis of articles of a magazine
 - More case studies to reinforce understanding.

Any other comments?

- One of my favourite modules so far
- Thank you, I really enjoyed coming to the lecture every Thursday.
- Really liked the assessment – freedom of choice for essay was great and the poster was a fun way of applying knowledge learnt. Thanks for all the mind maps!
- Thanks for making it interesting
- No
- Really enjoyed module.
- A lecturer actually passionate about what he teaches it v. refreshing + exciting (sic)

From what students said they liked about the module there seems to have been a positive reaction to the fact that it was based around discussion and group work. The topics also seem to have been popular for many students, especially ‘Terror War’. One student mentions that s/he liked the structure of the sessions with the theory first and then the applications to discourse which followed that. The student who says the module was important for his/her job may have been Joseph, who edited a local sports magazine in his hometown in Italy and was older than the other students.

Of the aspects that the students did not like about the module it is evident that a number of students found the theories quite difficult. It is useful to note that the mind maps are mentioned as having helped to make them more comprehensible. I think, on reflection, that I perhaps spent too much time on some of the theories in class and could have reduced this. This would have allowed more time for teaching the different aspects of the framework, particularly in relation to the grammatical features of the text which were not taught as fully as I would have liked. The theories will however stay, as will many of the readings, because at this level of undergraduate study I believe students need to be challenged, particularly in relation to ideas and concepts. It is important from a learning perspective that young people are exposed to such ideas and concepts if only to illustrate that there are various ways of looking at the world, and that it is not easily classified or comprehended. If the amount of

detail in the theory is reduced, this will also allow more time for discussions of texts and case studies which seems to be a common issue with regard to suggestions for things that could be changed about the course. Although these evaluative comments are not extensive, the module seems to have been popular with many members of the class. The social theory, although difficult for some students, was not an obstacle to class discussion and often facilitated the discussions we had.

Appendix C Module Assessments and Sample Coursework

M02919: Critical Discourse and the Media

Written Assignment

Choose ONE of the following assignment titles and write an essay which follows the instructions given. You should type your assignment and write not more than 2000 words. The total number of words does not include the bibliography.

Hand your assignment to the ICELS reception by 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 25 February (Week 7).

NB: Always keep a back up copy of your assignment.

1. Discuss Norman Fairclough's perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis and evaluate its effectiveness as a method of social analysis.
2. Choose a suitable media text and undertake an analysis of it using the TACO model to guide you. Your choice of text must be approved by the class tutor. If a written text, include a copy of it with your assignment.
3. What can critical theory and poststructuralism teach us about texts? Make reference to relevant social theorists in your answer.

M02919: Critical Discourse and the Media

Poster Presentation

Assessment part 2

For this part of the module assessment you should work in groups of 3 or 4 to produce a flip chart sized poster presentation which analyses from a discursive perspective a theme or topic which is currently circulating in the media. Each member of the group should write a short typed summary of their contribution to the poster, which should be submitted in class in week 9. This should explain your interest in the theme your group has chosen, and your role in it. It should also give your opinions on using the critical approach to discourse analysis which we have been developing in this module (TACO). There is no strict word limit, but you should write between one to two pages of typed text (Times New Roman; 1.5. spacing), i.e. 500-900 words. The summary will carry 10 marks and the poster itself 25 marks. A further 5 marks will be awarded for the poster plan to be submitted in week 7.

Your poster should contain the following:

- Written text(s)
- Images
- Your discussion of the discursive construction of the theme or event which your group has chosen.

Remember that this is a poster, not an essay – you will need to consider clarity of presentation in terms of

- size of font
- size of images
- use of bullet points rather than continuous prose
- use of colour

In week 7 you must give your tutor a list of the group members and a draft outline of your plan for the poster. You must make clear the tasks that have been allocated to each member of the group or the area of the poster for which each individual is responsible. This is a **compulsory** part of the assignment and carries 5 marks. You will not necessarily be penalized if you subsequently change your plan.

In week 9 you will be required to display your poster and present it to your colleagues and tutor. Be prepared to talk through

- How and why you reached the decision to select this theme or event.
- Which group member was responsible for different aspects of analysis and production. It must be possible to identify the contribution of individuals to the group task.
- Reasons for your selection of texts
- Key features of your analysis

You should also be prepared to respond to questions from colleagues and tutors.

Assessment Criteria

- **Clear presentation of analysis of texts from a TACO perspective**
- Coherence of communication to fellow students and tutors

All posters must be displayed and ready for assessment half an hour after the start of the timetabled session in week 9. Please give some thought to how you will do this. (Space required, blu tak, drawing pins etc). **NB Everyone is required to attend this assessment point.**

M02919
Critical Discourse and the Media
Assessment 1

Name:

Assessment Criteria	A	B+	B	C	F
Content					
• Evidence of having discovered and read relevant source material n/a					
• Ability to apply relevant frameworks of analysis	✓				
• Quality of analysis	✓				
• Ability to sustain a coherent line of argument	✓				
• Ability to use language which is sensitive to the conventions of context (register)	✓				
Presentation					
• Acknowledgement of sources – citation, bibliography (if applicable)	✓				
• Adherence to the given length requirements	✓				
Use of English					
• Good with few errors ✓					
• Sound					
• There are weaknesses					
• Please see marking tutor about your use of English					

Overall Comment:

A detailed and highly perceptive analysis in which you employ the TACO framework very effectively and make many valid and thought provoking points. The essay is very well structured and very well written. Excellent work.

Mark: A 75

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Module M02919
Discourse and the Media

Spring Term 2004
Assignment Week 7

Critical analysis of a media text through the TACO model
Bush's statement 'In the history of Iraq, a dark era is over'

Module Leader: Dr John O'Regan

This essay aims to undertake a critical analysis of a media text through the use of the TACO model. The text chosen for the analysis is an extract from George W. Bush's statement after the capture of Saddam Hussein. The extract is entitled *Bush's statements: 'In the history of Iraq, a dark era is over'* and was published on the 15th of December 2003 in *The Guardian*. The essay is divided into four main sections. The first section outlines the descriptive features of the text, the second one deals with the interpretation of its representative features, the third part focuses on the interpretation of the social context the text is part of, and the last section aims to deconstruct the general interpretation of the text. ✓

It's not just
an extract
but a
collection
of
extracts
≡

✓ With regard to its descriptive features, the text includes a main headline with a direct citation from the body, the main body and a picture of President Bush. Although the analysis will focus only on these parts, it is important to observe that the extract is inserted in a wider article, with which it shares the picture, that analyses the influence that Saddam's capture may exert on President Bush's re-election. Even if at a first glance the image appears to be more related with the main article, probably because of its large size, it may be said that it is more straightforwardly linked with the extract below, which directly reports what Bush was saying in the photograph. Therefore, it was decided to include it in the analysis of the text. ✓ A good framing statement.

In his statement, the US President announces Saddam's capture by the US Army and states what the immediate consequences for the former dictator's supporters, the Iraqi people, and the Americans, will be. Bush proclaims the news in quite a solemn tone; he states, "The former dictator will face the justice he denied to millions". His words sound even apocalyptic when he appeals to the end of a dark era. However, the President seems to prefer a more cautious style to the apocalyptic tones that characterise the initial part of his speech when, in the last part of the extract, he stresses that Saddam's capture "does not mean the end of violence in Iraq". In addition, the frequent appeal to Americans through the use of 'we' and 'our' suggests efforts of persuasion by Bush. ✓

Is this
the right
word?

The way the topic is developed appears to suggest the following preferred reading. The capture of the former Iraqi leader by the US military forces marks the definitive end of a period of injustice and brutalities and the beginning of a new era of freedom for all the Iraqis, or better, the Iraqis whose aims coincide with those of the US-UK coalition. The contributeⁱⁿ of the coalition forces has been vital in finding the dictator and liberating Iraq; therefore, the Iraqi people owe their freedom to them and to the "superb work of [their] intelligence analysts". Nevertheless, the capture of Saddam will not lead the US to take a softer line since a further and continuous military action in Iraq is still needed for the security of Americans, which is deeply intertwined with their perseverance in accomplishing their task in the Middle East.

It may be deduced from the text that its ideal reader is everybody who agrees with the way the topic is presented as well as both Iraqis and Americans. However, Bush does not address the entire Iraqi population, but only "the vast majority of Iraqi citizens who wish to live as free man and women", i.e. the Iraqis who side with the US, welcome the US commitment in Iraq and actually view Saddam's capture as a real opportunity to establish a representative government in the country. Similarly, despite his addressing all Americans, it might be said that a reference to those Americans who support his views and the cause of war is implied.

The second section of the essay deals with the representative features of the text such as image, vocabulary, grammar and genre.

With regard to its visual features, the text encompasses both written and visual modes. The main headline is typed in a bigger font in comparison with the main text and includes a direct quotation from the body in inverted commas. The body is developed in three columns. The image, which portrays a concerned President Bush during his televised speech at the White House, is more than twice as big as the written text, ^{and} is located above it ^{occupying} ~~and occupies~~ the entire upper part of the text, whereas the written text is located in the lower part. The large

OK...good ✓

size of the picture and its being located in the ideal position may suggest an attempt to emphasise the image of the President rather than his words or could just be a way to attract ~~the~~ ^{to} attention on the article. The small size of the written text, on the contrary, makes it appear of minor importance both in comparison to the picture and the main article it is inserted in.

In developing his speech, Bush makes a clear distinction between a negative and a positive side using a varied range of opposite expressions collocated with both the participants, Saddam's supporters on the one hand, and the forces of the coalition together with the Iraqis on the other hand. Words such as *bullied, killed, corrupt power and privilege, torture chamber, secret police, dark and painful era, violence* and *threat* refer to the former regime, the dictatorial regime of Saddam that has finally been defeated. In contrast, the values shared by the Iraqi people and the coalition, the winning side, are all high-minded values such as *freedom, sovereignty, dignity, opportunity for a better life, liberty*, etc. The depiction of the former Iraq as a rogue state and the former ruling class as mean, vile and despicable through the use of this dichotomy strengthens the image of the coalition as a power moved by the noble purpose of bringing democracy to Iraq. Moreover, words like *free, liberty*, and *freedom* occur quite often in the text, thus emphasising the importance that Bush and the coalition attach to this concept as one of the primary goals of their mission in Iraq.

In order to make the dichotomy between the two groups of participants stronger, words associated with opposite groups are often located close to each other or even in the same paragraph. For instance, in the central part of the extract Bush states, "In the history of Iraq, a dark and painful era is over. A hopeful day has arrived." Drawing adjectives such as *dark/painful* on the one hand, and *hopeful* on the other hand close to each other results in a further reinforcement of the opposition mentioned above. *Dark* and *painful* remind something sinister and evil and are therefore negatively connoted, whereas *hopeful* relates to the image of light and is positively connoted. In fact, the hopeful day that has arrived could be viewed as the *dawn* of a new era. Furthermore, the dichotomy darkness VS light may be seen as

✓✓ good

appealing to the dichotomy ignorance VS enlightenment, thus strengthening the image of Saddam's supporters as rude and uncouth. The central position of this sentence in the extract may not be casual as well as the choice of the journalist to quote it in the main headline as one of the key point^s of Bush's statement. ✓✓

From the grammatical point of view, the text well lends itself to some interesting remarks. The whole text is a continuous shift between past, present and future tenses. However, at a closer analysis it is possible to observe an overwhelming predominance of the present over the past and future tenses. This stylistic choice reveals Bush's will to focus on the current situation, on what has to be done after Saddam's capture. Even though he seems to be willing to avoid triumphalism by reminding Americans the necessity of going on fighting, his statement are all made as absolute statement, as 'truth claims'. He avoids using modal verbs, which may make his speech sound more cautious, and prefers simple tenses. Simple tenses, especially in the present, are usually used to report facts, which, as such, are meant to be universally accepted and therefore true. ✓✓

Good point ✓✓

In addition, the tenses make the dichotomy positive/negative even stronger. Most of those associated with Ba'athist holdouts are past tenses such as *bullied, killed, held*. Moreover, the verbs related to this group are often accompanied by adverbs such as *once, forever, ever*, thus conveying the idea of something that is confined into a remote past and will never come back again. This contrasts to the predominant use of the present in association with the coalition forces that now control Iraq. ✓

The whole text is based on the opposition between 'we' and 'you' and between 'our' and 'your'. 'We' and 'our' refer both to the coalition forces and the US, their armed forces, strategy, security, belief, etc, whereas 'you' and 'your' are associated with the Iraqis, their goals, country and culture. However, when Bush appeals to the values that the US and the Iraqis share by saying, "The goals of our coalition are the same as your goals", he clearly

seeks to include the Iraqis in the coalition, thus implying that Saddam is no more supported even by his own people, who now "take the side of freedom", that is the US side. ✓

As a genre, the text follows the features of the political statement. The repetition of ✓
key words or parts of sentences and the development of the topic through a series of
✓ parallelisms are some of them. For instance, in addressing to both the Iraqis and the
Americans, the President repeats twice "I have a message for"; in the last part he states, "*Our*
security [...], *our* perseverance, [...] *our* sure belief". Repetitions have the effect of stressing
some of the key concepts of the speech, such as the President's role as the coalition
spokesman and the US commitment in the war against terrorism, for instance. Parallelisms in
the development of the topic are detectable when the President clarifies the consequences of
Saddam's capture initially "for the Ba'athist holdouts", successively "for the vast majority of
Iraqi citizens." It is also important to observe how the use of some linguistic devices affects
the purpose of the text. For example, it may be said that through the use of a rising climax, i.e. ✓
a sequence of words with progressively stronger or wider meanings like "capture by capture,
cell by cell, and victory by victory", Bush aims to involve the ideal readers and share his view
with them. ✓✓

References to both his ideal audience and himself are present in the text. As mentioned
above, Bush appeals more than once to the Iraqis and the Americans through the use of
'you/your' and 'we/our', but he also refers to himself when he thanks the armed forces on
behalf of the nation.

The text is inserted in a conceptual framework that includes issues of politics,
geography, war, religion, relations of power, etc. In order to understand the text it is necessary
to take into consideration the social knowledge the text appeals to. The United States ^{has} have ✓
been attacked on September 11, and since then they have been waging a war on terror that has
not finished yet. The war in Iraq is part of that war as Saddam was supposed to host terrorist
groups linked with Al-Qaeda and to threaten the entire world with WMD. The war in Iraq has

also been justified by Bush with the purpose of freeing the Iraqis from Saddam, a dictator and a tyrant that has been persecuting and oppressing his people for long. In spite of the capture of the former dictator, both America and Iraq are not free from violence yet because terrorists still pose a direct threat~~en~~ to America and the Ba'athist holdouts, Saddam's supporters, are still "responsible for the current violence" in Iraq. ✓

The last part of the essay seeks to find elements in the text that may undermine its preferred reading. For instance, a potential element of contradiction may be found in Bush's appeal to the shared goals of "sovereignty for [Iraq]." The concept of sovereignty is related to the notions of autonomy and self-government, which, as such, should establish by themselves and not being established by an external agent like, for example, another country. His ✓ statement, "The goals of *our* coalition are the same of as your goals – *sovereignty* for *your* country," implies that the *US* want^s to *bring* sovereignty to *Iraq*, which sounds ^{like} as a contradiction. Finally, by saying that Saddam's capture "does not mean the end of violence in Iraq" and that the US "will not relent until this war is won", Bush sets out a future to the Iraqis that is far from being a rose^y one. This statement undermines his appeals to the end of a dark and painful era for the Iraqis and conflicts with his encouragement to "reject violence". ✓ Therefore, such a strong conflict between two statements that occupy two key positions in the speech, the end and the central part of it, results in a destabilisation of one of the key message_s Bush seeks to convey. ✓ Good.

Works cited:

Bush, G.W. (2003, December 15). *Bush's statement 'In the history of Iraq, a dark era is over'*. Extracts quoted in *The Guardian*, p.4.

Coup may get Bush off the hook

Presidential campaign Cautious words mask relief and delight at boost for re-election hopes next November

Julian Borger in Washington

The White House's watchword was caution yesterday, but the unspoken calculation was obvious. The key to President Bush's re-election next November may well have been found in a 6ft hole by the river Tigris.

The president received the first tentative news of the capture from his defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, on Saturday afternoon, when Mr Bush was at his Maryland retreat, Camp David.

He flew back to the White House to discuss how to handle one of the most significant achievements of his first term. Before Saddam was found on an Iraqi farm just south of Tikrit, the toppling of his statue on April 9 remained a hollow symbol.

One vital element missing from the president's premature declaration of victory has now fallen into place. The capture was kept a secret until the early hours of Sunday morning when the US envoy in Iraq, Paul Bremer, called the national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, with the confirmation of positive DNA identification. Mr Rice in turn called the president at 5.15 am.

Stung by the hasty triumphalism of May, the president's address to the nation yesterday emphasised the battles yet to be fought in Iraq: capture by capture, cell by cell, victory by victory.

But there was little doubt this was the victory the White House wanted most. It is enough to enable the US troops to begin to pull out of Iraq and for Washington to still claim victory.

Meanwhile, the US economy is striding into a deficit-assisted recovery which should peak just as the election campaign is in full swing. The rebound will almost certainly not recover the 3m jobs lost over the past three years, but it should create an all-important mood of renewal and optimism.

The Democrats' best hope is to convince voters that Mr Bush is failing to make them safer, today that looks like a much harder line to sell than it was last week.

The Democrat presidential frontrunner, Howard Dean, who has been highly critical of the president's Iraq policy, could do little else than join in the general euphoria. He told reporters that he expected the capture to change "the course of the occupation of Iraq".

"I think the first order of business is to say this is a great day — I congratulate the Iraqi people — and to say that this is a great day for both the American military and the American people and for the Iraqi people."

Senator John Kerry said the capture of Saddam was "a great opportunity for the president to get it right for the long term". He urged Mr Bush to "use this as a moment to transform the entire operation in Iraq".

Dick Gephardt, also running for president, chose to remind Americans that the war on terror was far from over. "For many years, we will be confronted with a war on terrorism that is unfinished."

On the campaign stump, where slogans count more than concepts, it is unlikely to matter much that Saddam Hussein had little to do with al-Qaida and September 11, or that he did not possess an arsenal of terrifying weapons.

Americans, like everyone else, require their government to put food on their tables and vanquish their enemies. Few enemies in history looked more vanquished than Saddam when having his hair



Bush's statement 'In the history of Iraq, a dark era is over'

Extracts from George Bush's statement

Yesterday, December 13, at around 8.30pm Baghdad time, United States military forces captured Saddam Hussein alive. Now the former dictator of Iraq will face the justice he denied to millions.

The capture of this man was crucial to the rise of a free Iraq. It marks the end of the road for him, and for all who bullied and killed in his name. For the first time, the Iraqi people are responsible for the current violence, there will be no return to the corrupt power and privilege they once held.

For the vast majority of Iraqi citizens who wish to live as free men and women, this brings further assurance that the torture chambers and the secret police are gone forever. I have a message for the nation.

Iraqi people: You will not have to fear the rule of Saddam Hussein ever again. All Iraqis who take the side of freedom have taken the winning side. The goals of our coalition are the same as your goals — sovereignty for your country, dignity for your great culture, and the opportunity for a better life.

In the history of Iraq, a dark and painful era is over. A hopeful day has arrived. All Iraqis can now come together and reject violence and build a new Iraq. The success of yesterday's mission is a tribute to our men and women now serving in Iraq. The operation was based on the superb work of intelligence analysts who found the dictator's footprints in a vast country.

Our security is assured by our perseverance and by our sure belief in the success of liberty. And the United States of America will not relent until this war is won.

I also have a message for all Americans: The capture of Saddam Hussein does not mean the end of violence in Iraq. We still face terrorists who would rather go on killing the innocent than accept the rise of liberty in the heart of the Middle East. Such men are a direct threat to the American people, and they will be defeated.

We've come to this moment through patience and resolve and focused action. And that is our strategy moving forward. The war on terror is a different kind of war, waged capture by capture, cell by cell, and victory by victory.

The operation was carried out with skill and precision by a brave fighting force. On behalf of the nation, I have a message for the nation.

even more. So it could get a lot worse. At the very least, though, Saddam is likely to provide a significant amount of information about the whereabouts of the lieutenants thought to be running the resistance in his name.

In purely political terms, the Iraqi leader's capture offers the administration a last chance to justify its invasion with the threat of weapons of mass destruction. If there is anything to be found, Saddam should know of its existence.

Failing that, the focus of attention can be shifted to the unquestioned brutality of his regime, as preparations get under way for a trial for crimes against humanity. The shaping of the agenda is always in the hands of the incumbent.

President Bush is not invulnerable. Only 52% of the population approved of the job he was doing, according to an Associated Press/Ipsos Real poll, while 55% thought the country was on the wrong track. A better economy and a Saddam trial should help those figures, but they are certainly not disaster-proof.

However, American voters have in the past been remarkably forgiving of presidents, particularly Republicans who have embarked on ill-conceived foreign adventures that have cost soldiers lives. In 1983, Ronald Reagan was under heavy criticism for sending troops into Lebanon and leaving them poorly protected in Beirut where 241 were killed by the bombing of their barracks. He went on to sweep almost every state in the nation.

checked for lice and a torch shone down his throat by a soldier in rubber gloves. Osama bin Laden would arguably be an even greater prize, and Saddam's capture will help free intelligence agents and special forces for that job.

As it is, the television pictures of the former, bearded Saddam will soon be spliced into the president's showreel of achievements, alongside shots of the commander-in-chief in an army jacket mingling with the troops and dining with the Queen, just as the images of captives and victory celebrations were chiselled on to the palace walls of Roman emperors.

The remaining electoral risks for the president are that Saddam's capture fails to stem the Iraqi insurgency, generating inevitable comparisons with Vietnam, and that the US is targeted by another terrorist assault on a September 11 scale.

Another major attack, however, could just as easily rally Americans to their leader, and make them less likely to extend political immunity.

President Bush announcing the capture of Saddam to the nation in a televised White House address. Photograph: J. Scott Applewhite/AP

This was the victory the White House wanted most. It is enough to enable the US troops to begin to pull out of Iraq and for Washington to still claim victory.

The electoral risks for the president are that Saddam's capture fails to stem the Iraqi insurgency and that the US is targeted by a terrorist attack.

M02919
Critical Discourse and the Media
Assessment 1

Name:

Assessment Criteria	A	B+	B	C	F
Content					
• Evidence of having discovered and read relevant source material n/a					
• Ability to apply relevant frameworks of analysis	✓				
• Quality of analysis	✓				
• Ability to sustain a coherent line of argument	✓				
• Ability to use language which is sensitive to the conventions of context (register)	✓				
Presentation					
• Acknowledgement of sources – citation, bibliography (if applicable) n/a					
• Adherence to the given length requirements Yes	✓				
Use of English					
• Good with few errors ✓					
• Sound					
• There are weaknesses					
• Please see marking tutor about your use of English					

Overall Comment:

A very well argued analysis in which a TAO perspective is employed highly effectively. You demonstrate an in-depth understanding of how the text is constructing itself as a textual event and provide many perceptive and thought provoking insights. Excellent work.

Mark: A 75

In this essay I will be analysing an article from The Daily Mirror newspaper, issued in the 19th of February 2004, from a 'TACO' perspective. This means I will be looking at the text as a critical object, with the view that texts construct social meaning and therefore our reality. The Mirror is a tabloid newspaper, so traditionally has a more working class readership. The text is written by the journalists at The Daily Mirror so it will encode their political and social views, meaning that their ideal reader is someone who adopts the same views or is open to them.

→ which one?

The headline reads 'Land of the Spree' which is a pun referring to the culturally recognised saying 'Land of the Free' meaning America, and 'spree' which is colloquial language, which often collocates with shopping. Even from this informal headline the reader can deduce that the article will be about shopping in America.

A mixture of images and text are used to create this article, with the text laid out in columns as is indicative of the format of a newspaper. There are two images used, which along with the large headline, take up the majority of the page. This is a common feature of the layout of tabloid articles. The first image is of the Statue of Liberty, which represents America's freedom, but it has been altered so that she is holding money and CD's as if she is giving them away. The caption above the image says 'FINE SIGHT: New York's so cheap for goods like CD's' which is a play on words, making the meaning of 'fine sight' ambiguous as to whether it is referring to the Statue of Liberty or the price of the goods. It also uses informal lexis by

contracting 'New York's', 'so' is also quite an informal word, and 'like' is not often used in this way in a piece of formal writing. This kind of informal language imitates speech and therefore puts the reader at ease. The second image is a table showing a selection of goods that can be bought at a reduced price in New York. The prices are compared, which will help the reader make a decision about how worthwhile a trip to New York may be in terms of the financial benefits. The choice of goods shown is

indicative of the readership of the Daily Mirror; they are all socially desirable items, and possibly indicators of financial status, which they can purchase at a reduced price. These goods would appeal to the ideal reader, who would be able to relate to the desire for the products mentioned. This establishes rapport between the reader and the writer, which is important when interpreting the text because the reader will be more

It suggests familiarity

id point

likely to take on board the writer's views if they believe that they have similar opinions.

The language used throughout the text is fairly informal, with the use of contractions, starting sentences with 'and', and the use of 'Brits' instead of 'the British'. These informal features imitate speech patterns and therefore make the reader more relaxed. Again, this helps to create a friendly reader/writer relationship. The vocabulary used is mainly positive, focusing on the financial benefits for the British shoppers, never once mentioning the possible economic implications of the falling value of the dollar. As a quick comparison of styles I looked at a related article, but this time taken from the business section of the Daily Telegraph on the same day. This paper takes a far more serious view, using formal language and more complex sentence structures, and focuses on the economics of the situation rather than the social benefits. By comparing 'Excess volatility and disorderly movement in exchange rates are undesirable for economic growth' (Telegraph) with 'Brits can find incredible bargains in America thanks to the super-strong pound' (Mirror), and 'With sterling seemingly heading back to the startling level of \$2, a figure not seen since the 1970's...' (Telegraph) with 'They are eager to cash in on the fact that the dollar has fallen to an 11-year low against the pound' (Mirror), the contrast in style becomes very clear. Because the tone is so positive in the Daily Mirror article, the mention of America's economic decline, and the mention of Black Wednesday, as in the Telegraph, would alter the tone, making it negative and therefore less persuasive. It is also a consideration that the tabloid press may not consider this type of in-depth economic information to be of interest to their readers, placing their readers in the subject position of social not economic interest.

Much of the positive lexis refers to the 'strong pound' and the comparative weakness of the dollar. For example 'super-strong pound', 'the dollar has fallen to an 11-year low against the pound', 'Yesterday the pound traded at \$1.91 against the US dollar', and 'a combination of the weakness of the dollar...'. This constant comparison creates an impression of Britain's power over a weak and helpless America, generating an ideological contestation of the representation of America as the most powerful country in the World. This is also highlighted by the British people being

Interesting point.

offered the opportunity to take advantage of their 'power' in terms of a relatively trivial activity such as shopping.

✓✓ The preferred reading is that you, the reader, should take their advice and fly out to America to take advantage of this opportunity. This incorporates the social schema of holidays and possessions as an indication of financial status. With these savings a holiday trip to New York can be incorporated with saving^a a huge amount of money on the socially desirable items that are shown at the bottom of the page. People enjoy ✓ reading about the spectacle of success or alternatively disaster. This text highlights Britain's success and instils pride in the country. It is irrelevant that the success is in the economic domain rather than a social domain because it still provides social advantages.

The conceptual frameworks used are those of the economy, money, and geography. The text requires social knowledge about September 11th where it mentions 'the September 11 downturn', and about the variable tax laws in the U.S.A., 'where you ✓ didn't have to pay tax' and 'Even with 8.5% tax'.

✓✓ Although the exchange rate will be constant regardless of where in America you choose to shop, New York is the focus of this article. This is because it has socially ascribed 'shopping status' and is often connected with competition prizes (Win! A trip to the shopping capital New York!). It also provides a useful comparison between cities, so that when London and New York prices are compared, the comparison is seen as fair and accurate. ✓

The article in the Daily Mirror takes on a persuasive style, seemingly trying to convince it's readers that they should go to America to take advantage of these bargains. Because of the genre of the text, the information can be given in a persuasive way, but the use of imperative language is not acceptable because it would change the categorisation to that of an advertisement. Instead the declarative form is used, putting the Daily Mirror in the position of the giver of information, and the reader in the position of receiver.

✓✓ U. good.

The only sentence that suggests any sort of deterrent is right at the end where 'retail analyst Richard Ratner...warned that the British buyer must factor in all costs'. Even this issue has already been addressed inadvertently by mentioning the amount shoppers can save (£600), and the price of return flights to New York (£180). At first this seems to undermine the preferred reading but in fact it assists it, because although it seems to act as a negative point, it has already been reasoned against. This gives The Mirror a caring image towards its readers, as if it only wants the best for them. ✓

The frequent use of superlative adjectives such as 'biggest', 'busiest' and 'cheapest' add to the persuasive element of the text, suggesting that now is the best time because it will not get any better. ✓

In the preferred reading, the use of the noun 'experts' as the head of the simple sentence 'Experts now predict the busiest time for travel to the US ever.' creates the impression that all of the names mentioned after this sentence are qualified under this category. ✓. Good. ✓✓

The use of pronouns in this text is not limited to the opinions given by the 'experts'; they are also included in the main body of the text. The third person plural personal pronoun 'they' is used to refer presumably to 'Americans' in 'While they are not exactly giving away goods...' and it is also used as an anaphoric reference to the 'record numbers', in 'They are eager to cash-in...'. The possessive pronoun 'our' is used to refer to the Daily Mirror's shoppers, 'our shoppers saved'. This inclusive pronominal has the effect of implying that you as one of their readers can also benefit from these savings. Within the quotations the indefinite pronoun 'everyone' is used, showing the reader that it is truly desirable by social standards. The second person personal pronoun 'you' is used in both the singular and plural form. It states 'you didn't have to pay tax...' referring in general to the people who had bought goods in that period, and 'You have to factor in all costs' which is a direct address to the reader, asking them to consider that point. The effect of Sean Tipton using the personal pronoun 'I've' gives the statement authenticity, and also suggests that if he can, you (the reader) can too. ✓

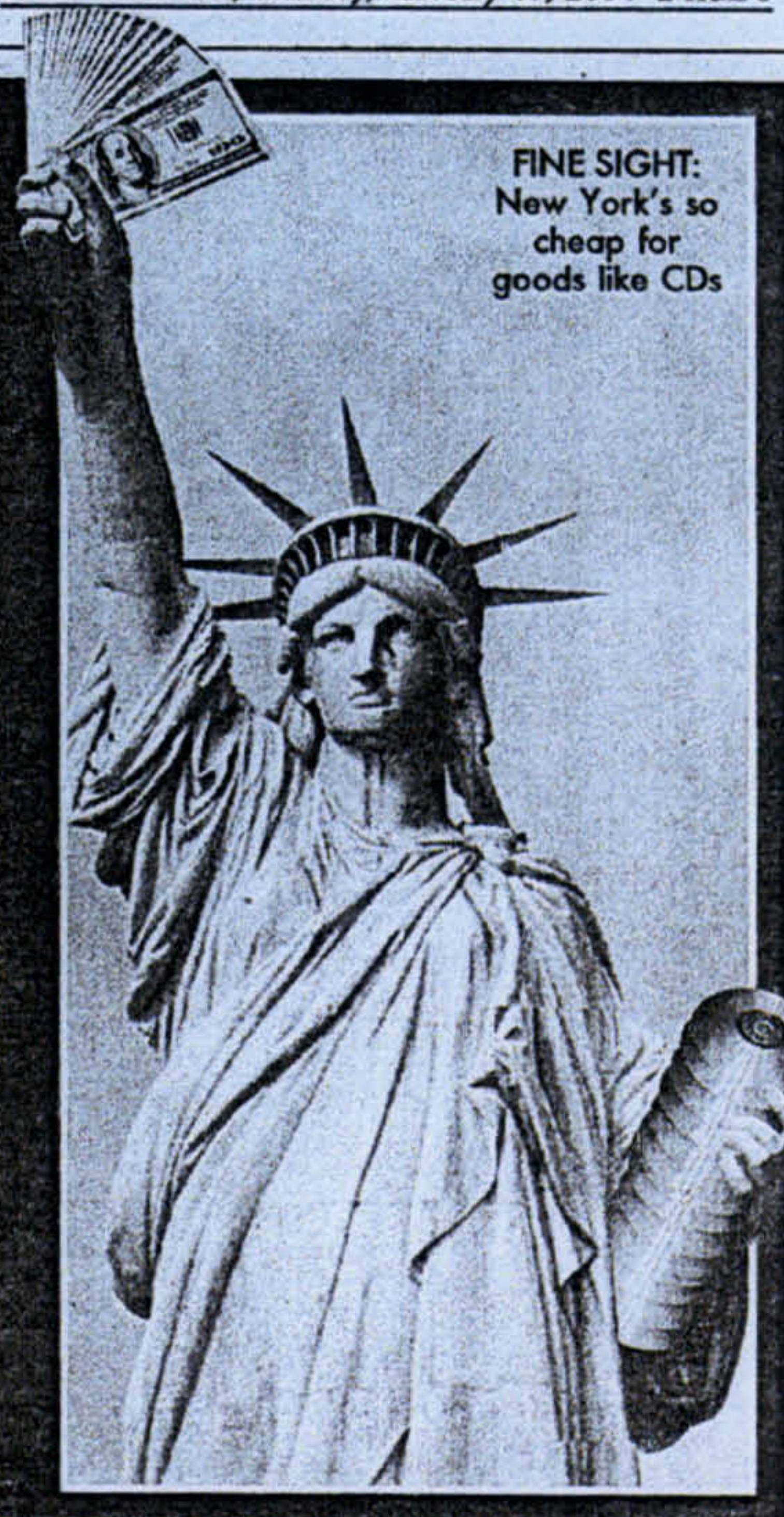
The sentence structure in tabloid newspapers is mainly simple or compound, which makes the text easier to read and can also emphasise certain points. This text illustrates this point well, for example 'The number of people booking holidays has been huge. Bookings in January were 20 per cent up on last year.' We also see complex sentences broken down into separate parts by starting a new sentence with 'and' or 'but', using them to imitate speech patterns rather than as subordinating ^{clauses} conjunctions. The paragraphs are also very short, only one or two sentences long, again breaking the text down into 'bite-sized' parts. ✓✓

The vocabulary that has been chosen is simple but forceful, and polysyllabic words are not very common, for example 'huge' and 'massive' are popular informal lexical choices in this text. ✓

This text is informative and interesting, with an underlying persuasiveness which is appealing to the reader. I feel that this text is effective in it's preferred reading because it presents a positive image of a volatile economic situation, creating a persuasive and convincing tone, whilst still keeping within the confines of the genre of a newspaper article. It could be said that this article is constructing a social ideology through presenting the concept of going to New York to purchase these goods as something everyone is or should be doing. ✓✓

LAND OF THE FREE

Strong pound means bargains in America



FINE SIGHT:
New York's so
cheap for
goods like CDs

IT'S called the land of the free – and for British shoppers in the US that is almost true.

While they are not exactly giving away goods yet, Brits can find incredible bargains in America thanks to the super-strong pound.

And there are record numbers heading to the States on weekend shopping trips as a result.

They are eager to cash-in on the fact that the dollar has fallen to an 11-year low against the pound.

It is possible, for instance, to fly to the States and buy an Apple iMac desktop computer – and still save more than £100 on making the purchase at home.

Experts now predict the busiest time for travel to the US ever.

Ruby Briggs, sales director of North America Travel Services based in Leeds, said: "America has come back into its own after the September 11 downturn."

"Everyone was talking about it last year but it's now happening."

"The number of people booking holidays has been huge. Bookings

By JILL FOSTER

in January were 20 per cent up on last year. Shopping trips are particularly popular and we've seen a huge rise in the last few weeks taking it to record levels.

"In January, New York had a period in which you didn't have to pay tax on goods so that had a big effect on the tourism."

"But people are still booking short breaks to places all over the East coast to pick up cheap clothes, footwear and electrical items."

Yesterday the pound traded at \$1.91 against the US dollar. The euro also rose above \$1.29 for the first time in its five-year history.

And in a Daily Mirror survey, our shoppers saved \$600 on ten items bought in New York as opposed to the same products in London.

One of the biggest bargains was the iMac G4 desktop computer, which costs \$999.99 at PC World in London but only \$679.73 in the US.

Even with 8.5 per cent tax, that is still a saving of £262. A pair of

men's Levi jeans was bought in New York for only £18.37 but in London the same pair cost £49.95.

Even recent terrorist threats to US-bound planes appear to have had no effect on the shoppers.

"People aren't bothered," said Sean Tipton of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA).

"We've had only a handful of calls over the past couple of years from people who are concerned."

"A combination of the weakness of the dollar and some of the cheapest flights that we've ever seen have meant a massive increase in people travelling."

"I've seen one flight for just £180, including tax, from Heathrow to New York."

But retail analyst Richard Ratner, of stockbrokers Seymour Pierce, warned that the British buyer must factor in all costs.

"You have to consider the cost of going over there in the first place. And if it's an electrical item, make sure it's compatible with UK voltage."

j.foster@mirror.co.uk

SAVINGS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

ITEM	LONDON	NEW YORK
Sony DSCVI digital camera	£449.99	£262
Christian Dior mini aviator sunglasses	£120	£110
Aveda 'Shakra' perfume 50ml	£40	£22.04
Dido's Life for Rent CD	£13.99	£9.94
Men's Levis 501s	£49.95	£18.37
Traditional Burberry handbag	£199	£171
Gap women's combat trousers	£39.50	£30.44
DVD Pirates of the Caribbean	£15.99	£13.09
Sony PlayStation 2	£139	£94
Wonderbra	£25	£18.89
iMac desktop computer	£1000	£737
Apple iPod	£399	£262

figures based on an exchange rate of \$1.90 to £1

'Pound's swings keep me on my mettle'

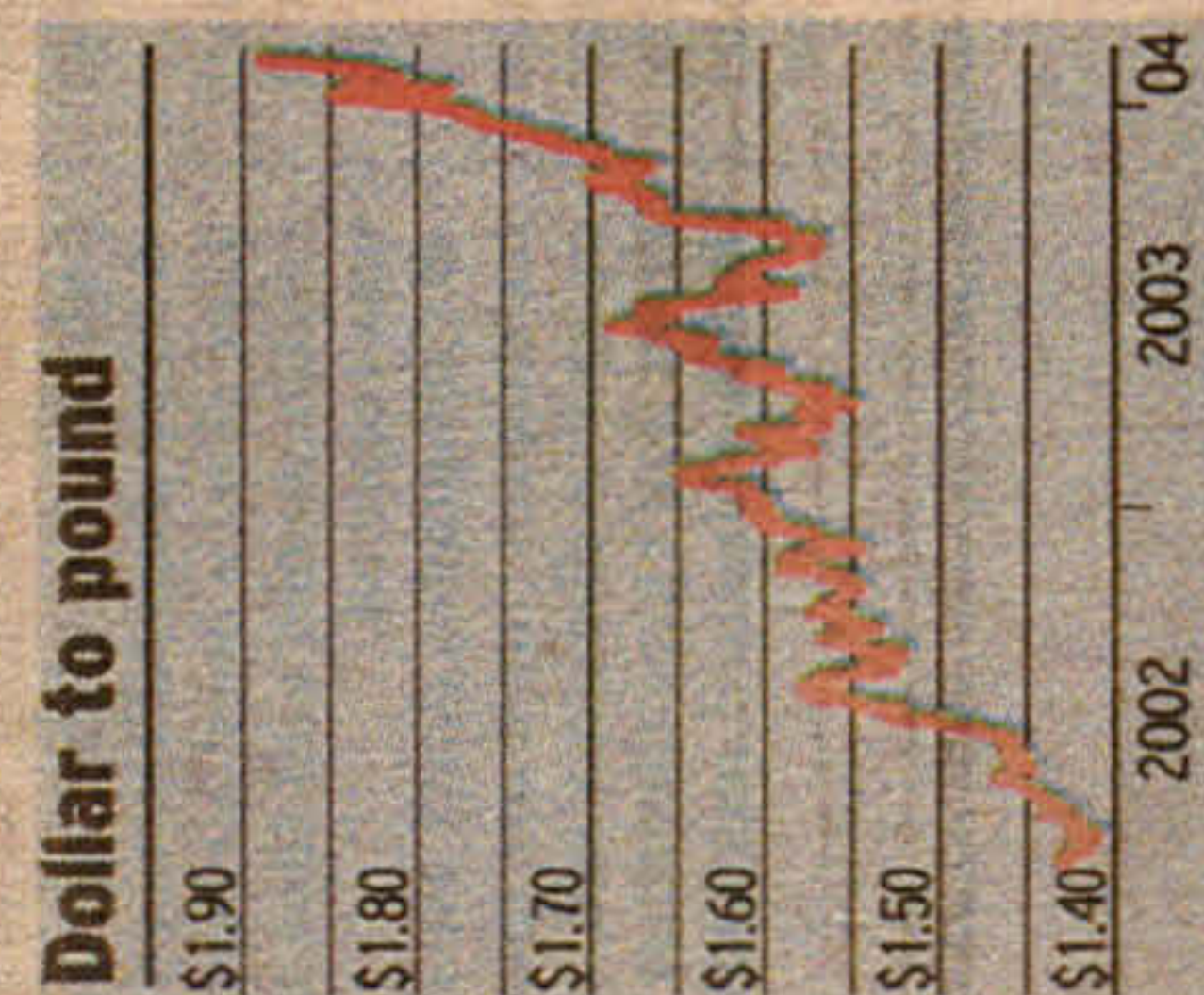
Those very distinguished finance ministers from the G7 countries, meeting two weeks ago in Boca Raton, Florida, declared in their end-of-summit communiqué: "Excess volatility and disorderly movement in exchange rates are undesirable for economic growth".

You didn't have to go to Florida for the weekend to realise this. Any British exporter could have told you the same thing for the price of a phone call. With sterling seemingly heading back to the startling level of \$2, a figure not seen since the 1970s, and the suddenly formidable euro on the rise too, exchange rates have been turned upside down in the past 12 months.

That sort of currency movement is hard to predict and even harder to combat. Mrs Thatcher told us long ago that "you can't buck the market" - a fact her colleagues had confirmed to them rather painfully on Black Wednesday. But never mind the politicians, what are businesses supposed to do about all this exchange rate volatility?

Where better to go for an answer than one of the last remaining industrial heartlands of the country, IMI, a business with almost 150 years behind it, is a very different company these days from the old metal-bashing giant that once sprawled over a 100-acre site at Witton, in Birmingham.

Today, the corporate HQ is a cool modern office block in a business park near the National Exhibition Centre, and its metal doesn't just get bashed any more - it is precision-engineered into sophisticated, high value-added products at the other end of the value chain from the commodities which IMI (the metals division of ICI until the late 1970s) used to deal in.



IMI takes the same sober attitude to its currency exposure generally. Martin Lamb, IMI's chief executive, says: "I don't want a position where you go into a management meeting and 80pc of the discussion is about currency and exchange rates."

For Mr Lamb, the business strategy comes first. Then you can start thinking about currencies and the implication of volatility on the business. "Think back to when the pound appreciated, and got up to 3DM, and everyone was moaning about it. I found that a very unhelpful environment," he says. "Everyone was focusing on the wrong thing. Intervention never works, we all know that. You don't want to get distracted from your external focus. We've always preached that at IMI. Set the business up to cope with DM3 - don't focus on things you can't do anything about," he says.

"We'd all like stability," he adds. "Volatility doesn't help. But there's nothing we can do about it. And volatility is never going to go away. Forget the activity of speculators - just look at the ups and downs of the economic climate - there will always be differences in the cycles of downturn and recovery in all the



regions round the world. You're bound to get currency volatility as a result."

That said, Mr Lamb is able to talk so stoically about currency volatility because IMI has a neat built-in hedge against it. Its profits are generated in three main currencies - sterling, euros and dollars - in roughly equal proportions. (All earnings from the increasingly important Asian market, including China, are treated as dollar earnings, because of the currency pegs that Singapore, Hong Kong and China maintain against the dollar.) So, as the dollar falls against the euro and dollar-based earnings decline, euro-based profits rise in roughly equal measure. IMI can look fairly calmly on the swings and roundabouts of currency fluctuation because the volatility inevitably evens itself up over time.

"The best natural hedge is to have a well-balanced portfolio with no obvious weaknesses in any part of the world," Mr Lamb says. "If we can do that, that's great." But Mr Lamb does not pretend to have had any visionary powers on this issue. "It would be wrong to claim that this was planned," he says. "It is a result of the genuinely global markets we

serve. We are not weak in any of them. That certainly helps," he adds. As a result of IMI's strategy to get out of its legacy businesses - the profitable as well as unprofitable ones - and relocate production where possible to lower cost countries, it has developed this natural currency hedge. IMI has also concentrated all its attention on what you might call a better class of customer - long term relationships with high spec industries, where barriers to entry for competitors are high. (Its two main businesses are "fluid controls" - crucial for other manufacturers, and "retail dispense" - mechanisms for drinks companies and other retailers).

IMI is now turning over around £1.6 billion a year, employing 17,000 people around the world. It has new production capacity in China, Mexico and the Czech Republic, along with its established western European and American sites. Its aim is to achieve a leading market share in niche, high value-added global markets.

Over the past 20 years, IMI has moved from being a largely UK-based metals company to an

international products company. This provides another kind of insurance policy for the firm. It is less vulnerable to low-cost competitors than in the past, and can afford to see out short term dips in profits as long as valuable long term relationships are being maintained. But despite this strategic acumen, day-to-day management of currency risk is still a live issue. Treasurer Greg Croydon says the firm's essentially conservative approach to currency risk is based on the same long term strategic approach to business. "If there are long term movements in currencies you can never get away from that - all you are ever doing is smoothing and delaying the effects of the currency volatility," he says. If a contract is looking very hopeful, currencies can be bought and sold forward to lock in to a given exchange rate. Options might be used if a big deal is on the cards but is more uncertain.

The point, Mr Croydon says, is to manage the risks they face more actively. "What we are always asking our businesses is, if you are hedging forward, and you are creating some delay, some lag,

before the movement in rates impinges on you, why are you doing it and what are you going to do in that time delay?" he says.

"We are trying to get them to focus on the fact that, yes, the dollar's gone very weak, and we know we are going to get fewer pounds for our dollars in the future, and so how can we adjust our cost base in the meantime? You may find you can source one of the key elements in your cost base from somewhere else, for example from China, pay in dollars - cut the cost and create a natural hedge."

The sober message from the Midlands seems to be: stop whingeing about currency risk. Get on with managing your business for the long term. "We try to make our businesses out there think about rate movements almost on a day-to-day basis," Mr Croydon says. "Rather than giving them a 12-month rate and saying - use this for the next 12 months - if you do that and hedge everything for 12 months, what happens on December 31st when the rate has moved by 20pc and you haven't done anything about the underlying business?"

"Think about the cost base on an ongoing basis," Mr Croydon adds. "We don't pull out of a market because of a currency movement - what if it swings back next year? It can take 12 months to move a business in or out in any case. We are less concerned about translational risk when we translate dollar back into sterling. These are sustainable profits. They will be there year-on-year. If the profits are down 10pc one year and up the next because of currency movements, that is more an issue for the analyst studying our accounts than it is for us. In the end this is all about creating shareholder value."

Poster Presentation Summary

✓ For this part of the assessment, Sarah and I have worked in as a group to produce a poster, using two cosmetic surgery advertisements as our texts. We felt that this was an appropriate topic because it is currently very popular in terms of media coverage. There are many television programmes currently being broadcast about cosmetic surgery, showing before and after, and the results are not always good! This appeals to the viewers sense of 'spectacle', we like to spectate on other peoples lives, often making a comparison between their choices and our own. It is also a topic featured very much in soaps, showing its normalisation because soaps are seen to depict real life situations. We thought that it would be interesting to look at the presentation of the subject form the advertiser's perspective.

In group work it is often a challenge to divide up the tasks in a way that enables each member to play an equal part, but we found that this was not a problem at all. Logistically it helped that there were only two of us to organise, which meant it was easier to find a convenient time to meet up. We met to discuss and finalise our topic and chose the advertisements together. We then each took an advertisement away with us and conducted our own analysis. When we met up again, we read each other's analysis and looked to see if there was anything the other person had missed, or could add or change. I think this was an effective way to conduct this kind of work because it meant that we worked individually but could also learn from the other person's work. We then met up to construct the poster, after discussing the format and layout. We chose to use a dark background so that our information would stand out on it. We backed the advertisements and the text relating to each advertisement in the relevant colour. We chose blue for the woman's advertisement, and green for the men's. We felt that this added interest and made a distinction between the two texts. We found that quite a few of the points we had made about the two texts were the same, so we put those in the middle, between the texts.

The border around the poster is made up of pictures we cut of magazines. It shows the media portrayal of celebrities in the ideal position. This is because these celebrities spend a lot of time posing for photos, which are then air brushed. These photos are then presented in magazines and the celebrity is idolised for their beauty. In the

bottom half of the border we have put photo's we consider to be more 'real'. This is how 'normal' people look, and because of the comparison between what you see in the mirror and what is displayed in magazines, we feel inadequate, so cosmetic surgery is portrayed as an ever-more appealing option... 'you can look as good as the celebrities if you have this surgery...'. The real pictures also include a sample of cosmetic surgery procedures that have gone wrong, showing the reality behind the ideal. One of the most interesting things to note about these advertisements in terms of ideal and real, is that the person the reader would be striving to look like is placed in the 'real' position. This makes cosmetic surgery seem like an option that is really worth considering because if you have these procedures you will look like this person.

The only problem we encountered with this project was the fact that we wanted to put all the major points of information on the poster, without it turning into an essay stuck onto a piece of card. When we met with our analyses, we found we had approached it in a slightly different manner. One had used a more bullet point style, which consequently included less information, but was more appropriate for the poster, and the other had used a more informative style, which made the blocks of text larger. This was a problem for us because we did not want to compromise the amount of information we put onto the poster, but we wanted to make it into a definite poster form. We decided in the end to incorporate both techniques, trying to keep both the style and the information. However, if we were to do it again, we would use less information and a larger font style.

I think that the TACO model is effective for analysing texts, especially media texts, because there is often a great deal more being said than meets the eye. It is only when you actually study the text 'as a critical object' that many of these underlying messages become apparent. Although it is fascinating, it is also scary to think how we are being influenced everyday by things we think do not affect us at all! This is an easy model to use because it divides the points into separate sections so that the analysis has an underlying structure and covers a wide range of points, from layout to grammatical structures.

J. Good.

8

Word count: 851

M02919 Discourse and the Media

This paper will report on work that was undertaken in order to produce a poster presentation that analyses how the media construct the relationship between genders from a discursive perspective. Before choosing the topic, we skimmed through some current newspapers, and we found an article about Ken and Barbie split-up that we regarded as an interesting topic for our poster presentation. It was funny, not too serious, and we considered it as a suitable starting point for a wider analysis about the way in which media texts construct the image of men and women and their mutual relationship. Subsequently, we looked for other articles and texts that dealt with similar topics in order to link them to the main text, the one about Barbie, and broaden our analysis. We finally found two more articles and one advertisement.

It was agreed to locate Barbie's article in the central part of our poster. We undertook a critical analysis of it through the TACO model taking into consideration aspects regarding the description, the interpretation of the representative features and the social context. Everyone was responsible for a different section; I had to analyse the vocabulary and the image. We discussed the main features of the analysis together, but afterwards everyone had to develop his/her own part alone, summarize it through key words, decide how to organise it visually (bullet points, arrows, etc.), type and print it. Once we had the different parts of the analysis at our disposal, we decided to stick them on small coloured cards and locate them all around the main text. It was agreed to use a different colour for every different section of the analyses in order to make clearer and immediately recognisable the distinction between the different parts of it. In addition, we thought the use of colour would make the poster catchier and more attractive.

With regard to the other texts, we decided to place them in the corners of the poster and, for their analysis, to select only those points of the TACO model that we regarded as relevant to each text. I was responsible for the analysis of the text about footballer's wives lifestyle, and I decided to focus on the vocabulary since I considered it as the most significant one for that text. Through the analysis of the vocabulary, indeed, it was possible to highlight the contrast between two opposite opportunities for women, i.e. going up the ladder or being kept by their male wealthy partner. The first one appeals to the image of the independent businesswoman, whereas the second one is associated with the idea of the woman dependent on her man. I regarded these stereotypes as appealing to issues linked with the main topic such as sexism in

the workplace, stereotypes of couples in the showbiz (media), men/women mutual relationship, etc. I decided to copy the most relevant vocabulary items in bullet points on small cards and to arrange each of them close to the part of the text they referred to. Afterwards, I drew arrows departing from some cards to link them to the section of the text they were related to.

The other members of our group did approximately the same with the sections of the poster they were responsible for.

What I found particularly interesting in the critical approach to discourse analysis is that it focuses on the analysis of the text itself rather than trying to find the message the "author/writer" wants to convey, even if one often tends to talk about the "author/writer". One of the strengths of it, I reckon, is the fact that it does not claim to offer *the* interpretation of the text, but it allows everyone to critically reflect on it. Through the TACO analysis, it is possible to challenge even what in the text seems to be completely coherent. Although not all the texts lend themselves to a deconstructed analysis, it is interesting to see how the internal structure of the text itself sometimes concurs to destabilise the message it appears to want to convey.

J. Card (8)

My part of the poster is about the description of the main text, which is Ken, my agony over Barbie bust-up. Below is the summarize of my part:

Description

- The text consists of one article, a character of Ken and a character of Barbie and Blaine in the box.
- The topic is Ken, my agony over Barbie bust-up.
- The topic being presented in formal and friendly. The main message of the text is to report that Barbie and Ken split up. The text seems to want to be read like a gossip column because it starts with the sentence "World Exclusive we got the story they all wanted"
- The ideal reader of this text might be a person who is interested in Barbie collection or a person who keep their eyes on what is new between Barbie and Ken.

We decided to choose this text as a main text in the poster because the text looked interesting to us. From the text, the writer reports to the audience that at the moment Barbie and Ken decided to split up. It is interesting to me that how they decide to split up because they are only toys. They cannot speak or think. When we first read the text, we discussed a lot about what is the purpose of the text. I think it is the Barbie's company that make them separate because they want to produce a new Barbie's boyfriend to the market. However we still cannot find the answer how the writer knows that Barbie and Ken decided to split. Apart from the main text, we decide to use other texts to support the main text's idea. In the main text, Ken and Barbie, it shows us clearly about gender and relationship through the media. For example, they said that Barbie is a kind of girl, who is interested only in clothes, fashion which the text called her as an airhead. Then we tried to find other text which

support the ideas that woman prefer to rely on man such as the text “ Why we are all wanted to be a footballer’s wife??” As we know that this society is men dominant, then we used another advertisement to make a contradiction that sometimes woman can be dominant over men. My contribution to the poster is not only analyse the description of the main text, I also shared my ideas to the group. I brought some articles and pictures to the group. I cut and stick almost everything that is showed on the poster. I am quite happy to do this task because I have learned to work, share my idea and accept other opinions. It is interesting to have a chance to work with three Italians. I found it was a bit difficult to work with them in the beginning of our task. However, later on we tried to adapt ourselves to each other and then in the end we finished our poster.

⑥

Good ✓

498 words

THE IMAGE OF GENDER & RELATIONSHIP THROUGH MEDIA

The theme that our group chose for the poster presentation is THE IMAGE OF GENDER & RELATIONSHIP THROUGH MEDIA. The first time that we met we looked at some articles from newspapers and magazines. We found an article from "THE SUN" with the following title "KEN My agony over Barbie bust-up". We decided to pick this article as the main one for our poster presentation. I like the article and I found the topic funny, not serious and different from the common kind of news. Moreover I thought that it would be interesting for the poster presentation because there are a lot of arguments to relate to it. We talked about the article and then each of us found in it some topics in order to apply the article to reality and to see how it constructs the real life. I suggested as topic the relationship between men and women in society and other topics were proposed like the physical appearance of the gender, or the women in career. We discussed all of them and finally we decided to give a title that was linked to the name of our module "DISCOURSE AND MEDIA". For this reason we chose "The image of gender & relationship through media". Then we found another article "Why we all want to be a footballer's wife..." and one advertisement to relate to our topic. We decided to put the main article "KEN My agony over Barbie bust-up" in the middle and all our pieces of analysis around it. We put some main parts of the other article "Why we all want to be a footballer's wife..." and the picture of Tanya Turner at the bottom and we linked them to the central theme because this article explains the women lifestyle as stereotypes in our society. We stuck on the right a photo of Heidi Klum to link this picture with the social interpretation of the Taco model. We decided to split up for the analysis of the article by using the TACO model. I chose the grammar and the genre that are related to the representative interpretation. I decided to do this part because I like to see the aspects of grammar and the elements of the language in the texts. Present and past tenses are used. The present tense is used in the direct speech, instead the present tense is used in the flashback "We sued and won the case" or "People called an airhead". Also the active and passive constructions are used both and they are used to emphasise Ken's voice. Ken is foregrounded as it can appear from the picture. It is the first information that the text gives us. I found the article very clear and simple structures are used in it. The text uses "we", "you" and "they". "WE GET THE STORY THEY ALL WANTED" 'we' is referred to the publisher, whereas 'they' is referred to the public. The author uses also 'you' related to the reader "And in one of the frankest interviews you will ever read". It is also interesting that the text is a mixture of genres. It is an advertisement but it is also an interview. The effects of this in the text are given by using the direct speech. I found interesting to use the suggested procedure for analysing texts (the TACO model) because it is a way to look at the text more carefully and to find in the text some aspects that often the reader does not consider.

Good 7

Assignment 2

(Poster Presentation)

Summ^aery of my contribution to the poster

Module: M02919

Tutor: John O'Regan

02087430

11/03/04

We were a group of five for this poster presentation, Alis, Chiara, Gianluca, Lara and me. At first, Gianluca was away from England, so we four looked at newspapers and magazines to find a main article for this presentation. We found an article, '*KEN, My agony over Barbie bust-up*' in The Sun, in our first meeting, and thought it would be interesting to analyse it as applying TACO. We divided TACO models into four, description for Alis, interpretation of representative (image and vocabulary) for Chiara, interpretation of representative (grammar and genre) for Lara and interpretation of social context for me. Until Thursday week 8, we were not sure how to organise and present our presentation. We thought what we were asked for was just to analyse an article as using TACO. However, by asking it to the tutor, we understood what to do clearly, so we started collecting other articles to link to the main one. Since we agreed to focus on the image of gender and relationship through the media after we read the main article, we found some relevant articles to that. As considering the amount of information and the size of the poster, we chose two other articles and an advertisement to connect to the main one. I analysed '*Mum-to-be Heidi in love split*' because it was related to my part, interpretation of social context. Chiara decided to take a responsibility for '*Why we all want to be a footballer's wife...*' and '*Summon your inner Goddess*' for Gianluca, since he did not have his part yet.

To analyse my part, for '*KEN, My agony over Barbie bust-up*', I thought the image of Ken and Barbie and their relationship could apply to our real world. Therefore, I described Ken as charismatic, charming and dashing, and Barbie as bimbo, moron and airhead. To make it more clear and give a real image to the audience, I chose Peter Andre's and Paris Hilton's pictures and stuck them near the analysis on the poster. I do not know if they really are people who exactly apply to my analysis of Ken and Barbie, but at least the image of them that we get through the media would be able to be similar to that. For the other article, '*Mum-to-be Heidi in love split*', I analysed it from the aspect of image, vocabulary, and social knowledge. I thought it deeply reflected the theme of the main article. Beautiful blond woman and good-looking rich man's separation, which is same as Barbie and Ken. By analysing these articles, I thought the media send us a specific type of image, especially about women. 'Blond' is often emphasised in articles, and people's impression of blond women would be 'beautiful'. On the other hand, when we hear 'blond', we also have an image of silly girls. I think

the media created them both because these features cannot apply to all blond women. About relationships between men and women in modern times, Heidi and Flavio's case is typically characteristic. Not only would it apply to celebrities but also it would fit for the general public nowadays.

I am interested in this kind of things such as the stereotype of men and women or images and roles of men and women that are expected or considered by others. Therefore, it was interesting to read these articles carefully. For example, in Japan, we do not have a bad image of blond women, like bimbo. We just think it is beautiful. I guess that it is because Japanese people never can have blond hair hereditary. However, interestingly, we have a similar image of Japanese people who dye their hair light brown. People tend to consider them flippant or frivolous and normally it is not allowed to dye hair light brown at work place and at school. I think it has a meaning that appearance can affect people's impression very deeply.

Using TACO is very effective to analyse articles, text or advertisement. Since it has many guides, it makes it easier to think and know about the main idea or actual meaning of articles etc. If I did not have TACO, I would have missed a lot of important messages of texts. I might still get brief ideas of articles without it but it would be like 'I just read it'. After TACO was introduced, I started to read articles more carefully to understand its real meaning. ✓

Finally, as a group work, I think we could make a good poster as helping each other. We had meeting at least 5 times and every time we brought each other's work to show and share the ideas as group. We worked individually occasionally but we always discussed each other's part in the group, so we all know everything about the poster. To make the poster understandable, we used colour papers a lot. One colour for one part, like yellow green for representation of social context for '*KEN, My agony over Barbie bust-up*'. In addition, we put some pictures that are related to our topic to show the images. I was happy to work with my group members. We all tried our best and everyone contributed to the poster equally. ✓

Good .

⑦

M02919 Discourse and the Media

Poster Presentation Write-up

For our poster presentation we decided as a group to opt for an idea that we not only felt strongly about, but something that was also relevant to our everyday lives. One of the group found the article “ There’s something we hate about Britain too, Sue” in The Daily Mirror, which we all decided would be a perfect starting point for our presentation, as there are plenty of things we disliked about Britain as well! Also due to the negativity of most of the articles we looked at in relation to the poster we knew that a great deal, if not all, of the articles we looked at would be very opinionated and persuasive in their grammatical structure.

Once we started looking for relevant articles we soon found that there were a great deal of interesting issues related to our chosen subject. This helped us as a group to really get involved in what we were doing, as we all had individual interests in the subject matter. We specifically enjoyed reading about all the many different things people disliked about Britain, and realising that we shared their opinions. It was an enjoyable task for us to each go off and look at a few articles on our own, in order to type up a summery of what they said, as it gave us each the chance to delve slightly deeper into an issue we felt was important. The articles I was given to look at were relating to racism (“Racists were allowed to hijack the word ‘Paki’”) and taxes (“Tax rebels are right to fight”). The article about racism was discussing how the British have taken the word out of its original racial context and turned it into a deeply offending insult to be slung at Pakistani’s. I found it incredibly interesting, but also deeply saddening, to read about all the different views on the levels of racism within British institutions. The internet, as well as magazine articles and

other newspaper reviews, provided me with a great deal of information as well as peoples personal stories relating to issues of racism, which I used in order to help me put together a list of shocking statistics highlighting the ever present racial attitudes in Britain today. It became clear to me that although Britain views itself as a good example of a multicultural society, the reality is actually rather different.

The second article I focused on was the one regarding tax rebels and our need to support them. Luckily, being a student, I haven't had to encounter much regarding the issue of taxes, however I felt very strongly about the ever-increasing tax rates, as soon enough I will also be one of the affected. Again the Internet was a very useful source of information, with many people's views and opinions posted on web pages and discussion forums. We took into account the perspectives of Foucault and Derrida as well as others when analysing the texts used in the presentation. The TACO model was also applied when analysing the texts irrelevant of their structure, however this was applied rather easily due to its malleability and the time spent in class using the model. After we had done our individual parts we met up and finished off the general layout and presentation of the poster and discussed how we each felt in regard to the others' ideas.

Sum. (6)

Discourse and the Media

M02919

Poster Presentation

Summary

When exploring which areas we could analyse from a discursive perspective we looked back at everything we have studied this term in the lecture. Looking closely at 'media spectacles' we decided to focus on something, which would affect everyone who considered it and which would provoke either, a positive or negative, but nevertheless strong reaction or opinion. We analysed newspapers particularly and noticed that the way in which many types of media portray certain types of news and issues is often biased and one sided and instead of giving an informed report contains emotive and colloquial language designed to influence the opinions and beliefs of the reader. Being myself, quite an opinionated person and always ready to take part in a debate, we decided to look at everyday issues which affect everyone and which cause controversy amid the British public. Growing up in a society full of racial tension, National Health issues and soaring crime rates these are all things, which will significantly affect our futures in this country.

An article entitled 'There's a lot we hate about Britain too, Sue' written by David Edwards for 'The Daily Mirror' gave us the basis for our presentation and we decided to analyse how the media construct our perceptions of the UK. Ultimately giving 'Stars gripes on footie, kisses, Church and UPVC' it expresses aspects and particular issues which certain celebrities dislike about Britain and gives us a good example of how newspapers, being just one aspect of media society, influence our opinions. By collectively publishing only the negative viewpoints on British society the article expresses a biased perspective and doesn't allow for any good aspects to be analysed. This in turn makes the issues

in Britain which are seen as problematic and frustrating seem all the more extensive and exaggerated.

Having all researched several types of media including T.V, the Internet and newspapers we ascertained that newspapers are by far the most guilty of subconsciously constructing its readers perceptions of the UK. Having chosen mostly articles from tabloid newspapers such as 'The Sun' and 'The Daily Mirror' it is evident that it is these types of publications, which are most responsible for trying to sway our opinions on certain issues. Also knowing that certain newspapers share particular political points of view also has a major affect on how they write about issues such as transport, law enforcement and racism in the community. When researching and looking through our lecture notes we found it greatly important to consider the philosophies of Adorno, Derrida, Foucault, Habermas and Kellner. Kellner's philosophy of the 'media spectacle' especially gives us a solid foundation on which to base our poster presentation and analysis. I personally looked at the main article and wrote up both the main and secondary introduction. I also analysed the article entitled 'Are our jails the softest in the world'.

Using the critical approach to discourse analysis (TACO), which we have been studying in the module, helped us considerably in pinpointing just how the media constructs our perceptions of the UK. By taking an article apart bit by bit and analysing its presentation, use of language and grammar we can see just how subtly and often, unknowingly to the reader language can help to enforce opinions and beliefs. For example looking at the article, entitled 'Are our jails the softest in the world?' and looking at it in its complete form, including the copy of a previous article entitled 'You'd kill for this..' illustrates the use of sarcasm and puns to express the point of the article across to the reader. Also the use of the rhetorical question in the headline

immediately poses a stream of thought process in the readers mind and gets them thinking about what they think the answer to it may be. In addition to the effectiveness of word usage and grammar in representative interpretation, the social and deconstructive interpretations of a text are vitally important in understanding the text as a reader. When interpreting a text ones schematic knowledge forms a basis for the way in which it is understood and so effectively makes up a readers whole judgement and foundation of their resulting opinions. Therefore, Taco conclusively provides us with a very effective and extensive basis from which to learn from and understand different examples of text. (696 words)

✓ Gord. (6)

How does the media construct our perceptions of the United Kingdom?

An article entitled "There's a lot we HATE about Britain too, Sue" featured in The Mirror on 26 February 2004, in response to Sue Carroll's previous article in The Mirror entitled; "20 things that really make Britain grate," inspired the title for this presentation. I was particularly attracted to the ironic use of the word "grate," as the British public are indeed often heard to be complaining about their country. This article is perhaps proof that negative perceptions concerning institutions in the United Kingdom are created and constructed by the media. Foucault's thoughts on identity i.e. an object/subject only exists once it has been classified, are interesting when applied to constructions of the media. If, as Foucault suggests, access to reality is only viable through discourse, is it not possible that the British citizens sense of reality, of 'real' opinions is moulded by the media? Would the British public's negative opinions of their country still exist, if the media did not first implant them?

During the preparation for the poster presentation, my role involved researching suitable newspaper texts and internet articles that demonstrate pessimistic opinions and ideas from the public that highlight Britain's shortcomings as a country. Using Nietzsche's idea of 'constellations' i.e. multiple representations of the object, we chose various topics that represented the main text. I chose to analyse texts on the National Health System, Law Enforcement and Immigration. I suggested including definitions from a dictionary to highlight the difference in language used by the newspapers to persuade and manipulate readers. I also

02049301

collected suitable art materials to improve the aesthetic quality of the poster.

This research was then collaborated with the group to create the current product.

I have thoroughly enjoyed learning that texts often conceal different readings, from that of the preferred reading, when a deconstructive approach is applied.

During the preparation for this poster I thought it crucial to take into account the philosophies of Kellner, Derrida, Adorno, Foucault and Habermas, especially when analysing the texts mentioned above. Kellner, in particular, mentions the philosophies of French theorist Guy Debord who talked of the concept of the

"society of the spectacle." He describes a society organised around the

production and consumption of images, commodities etc leading to passivity,

conformity and submission to the inevitable. Such a concept is evident in our

selected texts. Opinions created by the media are assimilated and reflected as

national opinion. Similarly, using Adorno's theory of immanent critique, that *Not quite*

attempted to explain the continued longevity of capitalism, one can see capitalist

society has created a frenzy of greed and gain. In response to this pressure, the

media has become a self-perpetuating mechanism, creating and publishing ever

more spectacular events in order to maintain continued readership. ✓

However, I found the fluidity of the TACO model particularly constructive, as it

can be applied to any text, whether it is a newspaper article, advertisement, even

a person. Its malleable concept and philosophical foundations means it can offer

greater meaning and understanding to a variety of topics besides discourse

analysis.

J. Cord . 8

POSTER PRESENTATION

Week 9 M02919

By going through several magazines and newspapers, we have been impressed by the articles which talked about Barbie and Ken's break-up. Although at a first glance this fact did not seem to be as social-committed as others, we figured out little by little that it could have been seen as a bright mirror of the changes in the relationship between men and women in the modern society. As a consequence, for the purpose of our group work, we have decided to illustrate this topic. Then, we thought it would prove useful for our goal to consider other articles in order to better highlight the revolution our society is going through.

Barbie and Ken's love story, in fact, reminds me of the huge number of couples that split up after little time they have been together. If we compare, that is, the percentage of divorced people in the last twenty years, to the one of the middle twentieth century, we can easily realize that it raised up very quickly. Therefore, we were not surprised to find the same problematic in such an enchanted world as the dolls's.

As a consequence, Barbie can be seen as the prototype of a woman that in today's society covers a dominant role since she can decide how to manage her life, choosing her work and whether to end or not a relationship, without restrictions by any male authority. As far as my role in the group was concerned, I had to analyze an advertisement that gave us the image of a young beautiful woman as mighty as a goddess.

In my opinion this picture wants to convey to the readers a specific message: young women have no longer to accept the decisions made by the former-powerful gender, but represent a dominant part in everyday life.

The picture I analysed shows us a young girl who can be seen as a holy figure: light is all around her head and this fact has a highly symbolic meaning. Men below her, indeed, seem to be both slaves and admirers longing for gifts given by their benefactor. We are led to think so, because they are trying to touch her as she was the statue of an omnipotent saint or an angel who came to the earth to show her power to her believers. The position of this young girl in the picture tells us important information: we immediately realize, in fact, that she can

master the whole universe, because she is in the very top of the photo while all the other human beings are in the dark.

✓ This gave me the feeling that I was looking at a woman able to brighten the world by her highness and her majesty.

In conclusion, we can say that TACO model is a real important instrument to analyse articles and pictures and it allows us to understand for better the messages and the real meaning of the important topic we have analysed.

Good.

⑥

Discourse And The Media Poster Presentation Commentary.

Annette and I decided upon the theme of cosmetic surgery for our poster presentation because we considered it to be a topical and modern issue that is constantly under discussion in the media. For the most part we stuck closely to our plan although obviously once we began our analysis some things changed. For example even though we assigned ourselves individual tasks once we had done them we each passed comment on the other's piece of work and proceeded to work on them together. Similarly when actually constructing the poster we both did a bit of everything. We had a relatively effective yet extremely simple production system, which simply involved one of us cutting out the information and the other one planning the layout or sticking the information on to the poster.

Obviously, as with any piece of work, there are both aspects of the piece that I like and dislike. For example the way in which we decided to place the observations from our analysis that are applicable to both of the advertisements directly down the middle of the poster, between the two adverts, is one aspect of the poster that I do like because I feel that it provides an obvious yet subtle link between the two advertisements. This particular part of the poster also, I think, highlights the fact that despite the two adverts being taken from magazines aimed at the different sexes there are various similarities to be found with regard to their persuasive and presentational techniques. I also like the way in which we made an effective use of the media, magazines in particular, in order to create our title. I particularly like the title because of the way in which the images seen on the individual letters have been cut out. For example I especially like the way the woman's chest on the letter 'A' in the word TACO has been used simply because it reinforces the topic of our presentation, as in fact do all the images on the letters in one way or another. Another aspect of the poster that I particularly like is the use of the media images to create a border for the piece. The reason behind my like for the border is simply down to the way in which we structured it-by putting the glamorous images at the top of the page in the ideal position and the more 'real' images in the real position at the bottom of the page. The ✓

concept of ideal and real combined with the topic of cosmetic surgery is a complex one. I am of this opinion due to the fact that there are numerous images of models and glamorous people in general throughout and in all aspects of the media and as a consequence the general public turn to cosmetic surgery in order to match that ideal of appearance and beauty. However it is feasible to argue that although cosmetic surgery does alter a person's physical appearance the outcome of the surgery is not actually real as it is the real that had been changed therefore the complexity as to what is real or ideal is created. I do not particularly like the way in which all the information is presented so close together as I think it makes the poster as a whole look cluttered and I also dislike the fact there is such limited space on the poster as a whole.

The way in which we structured our poster with the different types of presentation of information-bullet points and a more lengthy, informative style was done so for two reasons. Firstly it was simply just the two differing ways in which Annette and I went about our own individual analysis and on reflection we decided that it was better to have variation in our analysis so as to make the poster more interesting to read. Although when only looking at the poster the difference in presentational style is not apparent. Secondly we were unsure of the desired presentational style. If I were to be given this task again there are various things that I would do differently. For example I would provide less information and use a larger font so as to make the poster clearer and easier to read plus the information would then be presented in a more stereotypically poster style. However we did not want to compromise the information provided on this poster as, again, we were unsure of the desired presentational techniques. I would also make the title clearer perhaps by putting it on a different coloured background so as to make it more eye-catching. I would also back the information provided down the middle to connect the two adverts on a different colour of card to that used for the remainder of the information so as to draw attention to it and make it clear that it is in the middle for a reason.

In my opinion using the critical discourse approach to texts is a highly effective method. The way in which TACO breaks down the analysis into individual, concise sections enables the analyst to have a deeper understanding of both the text being studied and TACO itself. This particular method is also effective because it enables

you to adequately discuss each section just because each section that should be under discussion is clearly identified and described.

✓ Good.

Word Count: 890

7

O'Keefe, 2011, new version

Personal Commentary

Any time an election comes round in any public sphere, the publicity is almost overwhelming. In order to secure votes, the publicity for specific candidates is particularly important in order to secure the position of office desired. In the spirit of Oxford Brookes Student Union, the publicity ranged from a lighthearted approach, to a more serious angle which was aimed specifically at voters wanting the best result. The two posters we came across (Mark Bonnes for Communications Officer and Bekki Watson for Deputy President) represent both of these approaches. We felt that the chosen theme was topical and important to student life, and being able to deconstruct both texts helped to see not only how certain campaigns are run but which social areas politics, of any sort, is able to draw in. Language is a particularly important element in political campaigns as slogans, promises and just about all information included in the text can secure or lose a vote, so we felt these texts would be easy to link to media, language, politics, power and social environment issues.

Whilst the elections were being held, both Bonnes' and Watson's poster caught my eye due to the language they chose to use. In different ways, each poster had used and manipulated language to its own advantage, e.g.; 'You choose Wats-on in your SU!' and 'Bling Bling He is Da Real Ting'). From just looking at Bonnes' poster, I immediately began to deconstruct it from its use of language, theme and purpose. Watson's poster, as it juxtaposed Bonnes' novelty angle, appeared more serious and genuine but had kept a light tone by manipulating the language.

Anna, Jenny and myself met and discussed the idea further to see how we could use the TACO model and various other theorists. We began to note the themes on each poster, recording Bonnes' focus on popular and Bling culture and Watson's focus on language and politics. We felt Bonnes' could easily be linked to Kellner's theory of media spectacle and Baudrillard's theory of the copy. Watson's poster was more language based and we felt therefore could be analysed more deeply using the TACO model alone. As I had taken a specific interest in deconstructing Bonnes' poster, I decided to apply the TACO model to his poster. Jenny applied TACO to Watson's campaign and Anna focused on the theorist side of Bonnes' campaign. After we felt we had divided our work equally, we set out making group contributions, such as the visual presentation of the poster and our decision to arrange our poster so that the 'ideal' campaign (Bonnes') appeared on the top, and the 'real' campaign (Watson) appeared on the bottom, creating a small analysis of our own poster.

In deconstructing Bonnes' poster, it was obvious that there were several contradictions in the form which undermined his theme, e.g.; his desire to appear 'real' despite surrounding himself in falsity. I also found his use of slang 'Bling' language fascinating, especially as he wished to be elected as an Officer in Communications.

In using the TACO model of analysis, I found it far more straightforward to deconstruct a text, but breaking it down into smaller pieces to uncover the themes and agendas which the language, and also images, both appear to be representing and also, unconsciously undermining at the same time. The TACO links to the idea of a 'public sphere' was particularly relevant to our University election theme, as well as the instances of transtextuality within both texts.

Words: 589

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✓ Good.

Own Summary of our Poster

During a lecture one morning, I was sitting next to a series of recent student election posters and was thinking how interesting and different each one was, and how they each gave out very different messages to try to get the rest of the students to vote for them. Unaware of this at the time, Caroline another of my group members was also thinking the same. When we came together as a group to discuss the issues we could cover in the poster presentation, she came up with the idea of doing a comparison and a Text as a Critical Object analysis on two posters. Having been examining them myself, I agreed this was a suitable and fun decision that we should go ahead with.

We came together as a group and came up with a few of the main issues we could cover and discuss on the poster. According to how interested each group member was in each subject, we divided the workload up equally so that we each had our own interest we could investigate further. We decided upon doing either one main issue or two smaller ones, and I chose to cover the issue of the media spectacle, as well as covering some of the relevant theorists in relation to the poster. Instead of doing these as two separate pieces, I decided to use the theorist's ideas in relation to how this poster becomes a media spectacle, and to put these ideas simply into bullet points instead of straight prose to make it more accessible as a poster.

The three theorists I thought were most suitable to relate to the first poster, "Bling Bling, He is Da Real Ting", were Gabler, Baudrillard and Kellner. Gabler's idea that we all star in our own 'lifie' seemed relevant to the piece in hand, and I would be able to relate these ideas to the text. In addition, Gabler quotes "if everything is a copy, what is the real thing?" which I thought was extremely relevant, as the poster also uses this exact wording, though written phonetically to give the impression of dialect. "He is Da Real Ting," comes across ironically as an answer to Gabler's quote, and is ironic as to Gabler he is seen as the contrary to 'real', being a

copy. Baudrillard also uses the idea of a copy to accentuate how further and further away we are becoming from the truth, which is a definite theme in the poster, as he mimics a character which itself is an impersonation of not only a real person, but a type of person. Kellner's ideas that people are more involved in media events and spectacles than real life events also fit well in the theme of our poster. Little is mentioned about the elections, or what he will achieve as communications officer, but ✓ centred on the spectacle of him impersonating a popular character to gain popularity and votes through humour.

We all decided to research pictures and paraphernalia on the 'bling bling' culture such as hand outs and flyers to add to the aesthetics of the poster. We also split researching and gaining knowledge on other election campaigns, to compare with the other poster of Becci Watson, as she adopts a more formal approach to election campaigning.

Finally when the poster has been assembled, we will do a brief analysis of it using Van Leeuwen and Kress's model, *The Grammar of Visual Design*. Our own poster is created to fit in with the idea of the 'ideal' at the top of the poster, showing Bonnes campaign, with its binaries, falsities and by being a copy of a copy it becomes almost unreal, by using a idealised image. Becci Watson's more realistic poster campaign appears at the bottom of the page, in the 'real' section, with its more serious commentary. We aim to write this description as a group.

By analysing the texts using the TACO model we have developed through the module, I have come to realise a lot more in texts than I had previously done, especially in such things as magazine articles. With the idea of the preferred reader in mind, more questions into the text are opened and answered by analysing it through TACO.

✓ Good.
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Word count: 713

Personal Contribution

The topic of our poster is the Oxford Brookes Student Union Elections. Caroline initially came up with the idea, and we did not think that it was necessary to consider any other options, as this idea fitted the criteria required for the poster. These requirements were that the topic should be current and relevant to us, as it would allow us to get involving in the poster with interest. Also, the elections provided us with a wide range of discourse to choose from to analyse on our poster.

Once we had chosen the topic, we discussed together the best way to present it through the medium of a poster. We decided that using posters from two contrasting campaigns would make a visually striking display on a poster, and would also give us plenty to analyse.

The first campaign we decided to use was for the position of Communications Officer, which was a humorous poster and a non-sabbatical position. As a contrast to this, we chose a Deputy President campaign, which is a sabbatical, full time post. This was reflected in the more sensible tone of this poster.

When these posters had been selected, we looked at how the posters could be analysed and what we could bring to the poster that we had learnt on the course. We decided that because the posters were a combination of both visual and verbal communication, that the TACO method of analysis could be applied to both posters. This would allow a viewer of the poster to see the analysis applied to contrasting posters, and by applying the same analytical method both it would give a sense of continuity.

My personal contribution to the poster was to analyse the Deputy President poster using the TACO method. Rather than writing the analysis in the form of an essay, I broke the analysis down into small sections. This seemed appropriate for the format of the presentation, as the analysis would be clear for someone looking at the poster.

When it came to putting the poster together, we were focused on the visual presentation of the topic. We wanted to make the poster interesting to look at as well as informative, so decided to use a plain coloured background and lots of bright colours. We themed the poster with yellow and orange because of the colours of each campaign poster, as we thought this would make our poster visually pleasing. We backed each section of the text with a contrasting colour to the poster it was discussing, and chose green for Anna's section to make it stand out.

We also arranged our poster to reflect the idea of the real and ideal, choosing to place the Communications Officer, with his 'ideal' image at the top of the page and the Deputy President, the 'real' candidate at the bottom.

Anna and I made decorations for the poster, choosing to make a large medallion for the Communications Officer to reflect the theme of his poster. We then made rosettes for the Deputy President as this seemed appropriate for the more serious nature of her campaign.

Overall, the finished poster seems to have met our aims. It contains detailed analysis and comparison of the relevant student topic, yet it presented in an interesting way. I also think that we have worked well together as a group, as we have cooperated, shared the work out fairly and met our deadlines.

G ord ✓

Word Count: 583

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